



# *The Centuries' Poetry*

AN ANTHOLOGY

COMPILED BY DENYS KILHAM ROBERTS

VOLUME

5

BRIDGES TO THE PRESENT DAY

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## *Contents*

<b>ROBERT BRIDGES</b>	
'I heard a linnet courting	11
On a Dead Child	12
'I will not let thee go . .	13
<b>RANDIS THOMPSON</b>	
The Hound of Heaven	14
<b>ALICE MEYNELL</b>	
The Rainy Summer	19
'I am the Way'	20
To Any Poet	20
<b>E. HOUSMAN</b>	
'Shot' So quick, so clean an ending'	22
'When first my way to fair I took ...'	23
Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries	23
'Tell me not here, it needs not saying	23
<b>WARD THOMAS</b>	
Tall Nettles	24
The New House	25
<b>MARLOTTE MEW</b>	
Sea Love	25
<b>E. FLEGGER</b>	
The Old Ships	26
Yasmin	27
<b>HENRY NEWI</b>	
The War Films	28
<b>ROBERT BROOKE</b>	
Heaven	29
Desertion	30

RUDYARD KIPLING

‘Cities and Thrones and Powers ...’

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL (‘A. E.’)

Germinal

W. B. YEATS

The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland

Meru

Coole and Ballylee, 1931

Death

JULIAN GRENFELL

Into Battle

ISAAC ROSENBERG

Returning, we hear the Larks

Break of Day in the Trenches

JOHN FREEMAN

Possession

Caterpillars

W. H. DAVIES

The Truth

Dreams of the Sea

HAROLD MONRO

The Nightingale near the House

WILFRED OWEN

Insensibility

Exposure

G. K. CHESTERTON

The Modern Manichee

The Shipwrights *from* For Five Guilds

D. H. LAWRENCE

Kangaroo

Snake

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Epitaph

JOHN DRINKWATER

Moonlit Apples 55

The Fool 56

Birthright 57

GERALD GOULD

Sonnet 'This is the horror . ' 58

Sonnet 'I am frightened . ' 58

HUMBERT WOLFE

Love is a Keeper of Swans 59

ARTHUR SYMONS

Palm Sunday Naples 60

LAURENCE BINYON

*From* Tristram's End 60

Nothing is Enough 65

*From* The Idols 65

HILAIRE BELLOC

Hannaker Mill 66

T. STURGE MOORE

Reason Enough 67

WALTER DE LA MARE

The Scribe 67

The Cage 68

Fare Well 68

The Song of the Mad Prince 69

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

Eager Spring 70

'I am tired of the wind - .. ' 70

JOHN MASEFIELD

The Yarn of the 'Loch Achray' 71

*From* Reynard the Fox 73

Port of Holy Peter 74

WILFRID GIBSON

- By the Weir 75

OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

Per Iter Tenebricosum

'Our friends go with us ...'

ALFRED NOYES

Seagulls on the Serpentine

HERBERT E. PALMER

The Fiddler and the Girl

Rock Pilgrim

JAMES JOYCE

Strings in the Earth

JAMES STEPHENS

The Centaurs

The Main-deep

ANDREW YOUNG

Last Snow

Culbin Sands

Autumn

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Falling Asleep

Presences Perfected

EDWIN MUIR

The Riders

The Journey

Merlin

EDITH SITWELL

Colonel Fantock

*From* Romance

T. S. ELIOT

Journey of the Magi

Rhapsody on a Windy Night

The Hollow Men

F. W. HARVEY

Ducks

W. J. TURNER

Romance	103
India	104
Silence	104

OSBERT SITWELL

Prologue to England Reclaimed	105
On the Coast of Coromandel	106

RICHARD CHURCH

Mud	107
-----	-----

HERBERT READ

A Short Poem for Armistice Day	108
Bombing Casualties Spain	109

LILIAN BOWES LYON

Pastoral	110
----------	-----

EDMUND BLUNDEN

The Pike	110
The Poor Man's Pig	111

F. R. HIGGINS

Father and Son	112
----------------	-----

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

<i>From Agamemnon's Tomb</i>	113
<i>From Bohemund, Prince of Antioch</i>	115

RUTH PITTER

Of Silence and the Air	117
------------------------	-----

ROY CAMPBELL

The Zebras	118
Torn	118

A. S. J. TESSIMOND

Earthfast	120
-----------	-----

C. DAY LEWIS

The Conflict	120
'Oh subterranean fires ..'	121
A Time to Dance	123

RONALD BOTTRALL

To a Chinese Girl

WILLIAM EMPSON

Letter V

W. H. AUDEN

'Hearing of harvest ...

'Look, stranger, ...'

To a Writer on his Birthday

LOUIS MACNEICE

Perseus

Iceland

Song

JOHN PUDNEY

First Drums Heard

BERNARD SPENCER

Allotments: April

STEPHEN SPENDER

'He will watch the hawk .

'I think continually ...'

Ultima Ratio Regum

KENNETH ALLOTT

Exodus

CHARLES MADGE

Solar Creation

LAURENCE WHISTLER

*From The Burial*

GEORGE BARKER

The Leaping Laughters

Epistle to a Friend

CLIFFORD DYMENT

A Switch cut in April

DYLAN THOMAS

'The force that through the green fuse

'Where once the waters . . '

## ROBERT BRIDGES

### *'I Heard a Linnet Courting ..'*

I heard a linnèt courting  
His lady in the spring  
His mates were idly sporting,  
Nor stayed to hear him sing  
His song of love —  
I fear my speech distorting  
His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading  
Were full of young delight ;  
And she that gave him heeding  
Interpreted aright  
His gay, sweet notes, —  
So sadly marred in the reading, —  
His tender notes

And when he ceased, the hearer  
Awaited the refrain,  
Till swiftly perching nearer  
He sang his song again,  
His pretty song —  
Would that my verse spake clearer  
His tender song !

Ye happy, airy creatures !  
That in the merry spring  
Think not of what misfeatures  
Or cares the year may bring ;  
But unto love  
Resign your simple natures  
To tender love.

*On a Dead Child*

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,  
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair !  
     Though cold and stark and bare,  
 The bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.

Thy mother's treasure wert thou ; — alas ! no longer  
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy ; to be  
     Thy father's pride ; — ah, he  
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make stronger

To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,  
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond;  
     Startling my fancy fond  
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.

Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:  
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;  
     Yet feels to my hand as if  
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

So I lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing, —  
 Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed ! —  
     Propping thy wise, sad head,  
 Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing.

So quiet ! doth the change content thee ? — Death, whither hast  
     he taken thee ?  
 To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this ?  
     The vision of which I miss,  
 Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee  
     awaken thee ?

Ah ! little at best can all our hopes avail us  
 To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,  
     Unwilling, alone we embark,  
 And the things we have seen and have known and have heard  
     of, fail us.

*'I Will Not Let Thee Go . '*

I will not let thee go  
Ends all our month-long love in this?  
Can it be summed up so,  
Quit in a single kiss?  
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go  
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,  
As the soft south can blow  
And toss the feathered seeds,  
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
Had not the great sun seen, I might,  
Or were he reckoned slow  
To bring the false to light,  
Then might I let thee go

I will not let thee go.  
The stars that crowd the summer skies  
Have watched us so below  
With all their million eyes,  
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go. \  
Have we not chid the changeeful moon,  
Now rising late, and now  
Because she set too soon,  
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.  
Have not the young flowers been content,  
Plucked ere their buds could blow,  
To seal our sacrament?  
I cannot let thee go.

I will not let thee go.  
 I hold thee by too many bands:  
 Thou sayest farewell, and lo!  
 I have thee by the hands,  
 And will not let thee go.

## FRANCIS THOMPSON

### *The Hound of Heaven*

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days,  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
 Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
 Up vistaed hopes I sped,  
 And shot, precipitated,  
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
 But with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 They beat – and a Voice beat  
 More instant than the Feet –  
 ‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
 Trellised with intertwining charities,  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
 Yet was I sore adread  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
 Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled,  
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,

Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars,  
Fretted to dulcet jars  
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.  
I said to Dawn Be sudden – to Eve Be soon;  
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
From this tremendous Lover –  
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
My own betrayal in their constancy,  
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue,  
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind  
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
The long savannahs of the blue,  
Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
They clangèd His chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet –  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Still with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
Came on the following Feet,  
And a Voice above their beat –  
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me'

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
In face of man or maid,  
But still within the little children's eyes  
Seems something, something that replies,  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!  
I turned me to them very wistfully,  
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
With dawning answers there,  
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair

'Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share  
 With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;  
 Let me greet you lip to lip,  
 Let me twine with you caresses,  
 Wantoning  
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
 Banqueting  
 With her in her wind-walled palace,  
 Underneath her azured daïs,  
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is,  
 From a chalice  
 Lucent-weeping out of the day-spring '  
 So it was done:  
*I in their delicate fellowship was one —*  
 Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.  
*I knew all the swift importings*  
*On the wilful face of skies;*  
*I knew how the clouds arise*  
*Spumed of the wild sea-snortings;*  
*All that's born or dies*  
 Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
 Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine,  
 With them joyed and was bereaven.  
 I was heavy with the even,  
 When she lit her glimmering tapers  
 Round the day's dead sanctities.  
 I laughed in the morning's eyes.  
 I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
 Heaven and I wept together,  
 And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;  
 Against the red throb of its sunset heart  
 I laid my own to beat,  
 And share commingling heat;  
 But not by that, by that, was eased my hum in sin;  
 In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.  
 For ah! we know not what each other says,  
 These things, and I, in sound I speak —

*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.  
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth,  
Let her, if she would owe me,  
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me  
The breasts of her tenderness  
Never did any milk of hers once bless  
My thirsting mouth  
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,  
With unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
And past those noisèd Feet  
A Voice comes yet more fleet –  
'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!  
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,  
And smitten me to my knee,  
I am defenceless utterly.  
I slept, methinks, and woke,  
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.  
In the rash lusthead of my young powers,  
I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,  
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years –  
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.  
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,  
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream  
Yea, faileth now even dream  
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist,  
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding, cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed  
Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?  
Ah! must –  
Designer infinite! –

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?  
 My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;  
 And now my heart is as a broken fount,  
 Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever  
 From the dank thoughts that shiver  
 - Upon the sighful branches of my mind  
 Such is; what is to be?  
 The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?  
 I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;  
 Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
 From the hid battlements of Eternity,  
 Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
 Round the half glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.  
 But not ere him who summoneth  
 I first have seen, enwound  
 With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned,  
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields  
 Be dunged with rotten death?  
 Now of that long pursuit  
 Comes on at hand the bruit;  
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea  
 'And is thy earth so marred,  
 Shattered in shard on shard?  
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
 'Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said)  
 'And human love needs human meriting  
 How hast thou merited –  
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
 Alack, thou knowest not  
 How little worthy of any love thou art!  
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
 Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms  
All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home—  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

## ALICE MEYNELL

### *The Rainy Summer*

There's much afoot in heaven and earth this year,  
The winds hunt up the sun, hunt up the moon,  
Trouble the dubious dawn, hasten the drear  
Height of a threatening noon

No breath of boughs, no breath of leaves, of fronds  
May linger or grow warm, the trees are loud,  
The forest, rooted, tosses in her bonds,  
And strains against the cloud.

No scents may pause within the garden-fold,  
The rifled flowers are cold as ocean-shells,  
Bees, humming in the storm, carry their cold  
Wild honey to cold cells

*'I Am The Way'*

Thou art the Way.  
Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,  
I cannot say  
If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

I cannot see —  
I, child of process — if there lies  
An end for me,  
Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach  
The road that winds, my feet that err.  
Access, approach  
Art Thou, Time, Way, and Way farer.

*To Any Poet*

Thou who singest through the earth  
All the earth's wild creatures fly thee;  
Everywhere thou marrest mirth, —  
Dumbly they defy thee;  
There is something they deny thee.

Pines thy fallen nature ever  
For the unfallen Nature sweet.  
But she shuns thy long endeavour,  
Though her flowers and wheat  
Throng and press thy pausing feet.

Though thou tame a bird to love thee  
Press thy face to grass and flowers,  
All these things reserve above thee  
Secrets in the bowers,  
Secrets in the sun and showers.

Sing thy sorrow, sing thy gladness,  
In thy songs must wind and tree

Bear the fictions of thy sadness,  
Thy humanity.  
For their truth is not for thee.

Wait, and many a secret nest,  
Many a hoarded winter-store  
Will be hidden on thy breast.  
Things thou longest for  
Will not fear or shun thee more.

Thou shalt intimately lie  
In the roots of flowers that thrust  
Upwards from thee to the sky,  
With no more distrust  
When they blossom from thy dust.

Silent labours of the rain  
Shall be near thee, reconciled,  
Little lives of leaves and grain,  
All things shy and wild,  
Tell thee secrets, quiet child.

Earth, set free from thy fair fancies  
And the art thou shalt resign,  
Will bring forth her rue and pansies  
Unto more divine  
Thoughts than any thoughts of thine.

Nought will fear thee, humbled creature  
There will lie thy mortal burden  
Pressed unto the heart of Nature,  
Songless in a garden,  
With a long embrace of pardon

Then the truth all creatures tell,  
And His will Whom thou entreatest,  
Shall absorb thee, there shall dwell  
Silence, the completest  
Of thy poems, last, and sweetest

A. E. HOUSMAN

*'Shot? So Quick, so Clean an Ending? ...'*

Shot<sup>d</sup> so quick, so clean an ending<sup>d</sup>  
Oh that was right, lad, that was brave  
Yours was not an ill for mending,  
'Twas best to take it to the grave.

Oh you had forethought, you could reason,  
And saw your road and where it led,  
And early wise and brave in season  
Put the pistol to your head.

Oh soon, and better so than later  
After long disgrace and scorn,  
You shot dead the household traitor,  
The soul that should not have been born

Right you guessed the rising morrow  
And scorned to tread the mire you must  
Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,  
But men may come to worse than dust.

Souls undone, undoing others, –  
Long time since the tale began.  
You would not live to wrong your brothers.  
Oh lad, you died as fits a man.

Now to your grave shall friend and stranger  
With ruth and some with envy come  
Undishonoured, clear of danger,  
Clean of guilt, pass hence and home.

Turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking,  
And here, my son, here's the wreath I've made  
'Tis not a gift that's worth the taking,  
But wear it and it will not fade

*'When First my Way to Fair I Took ...'*

When first my way to fair I took  
Few pence in purse had I,  
And long I used to stand and look  
At things I could not buy.

Now times are altered if I care  
To buy a thing, I can,  
The pence are here and here's the fair,  
But where's the lost young man?

— To think that two and two are four  
And neither five nor three  
The heart of man has long been sore  
And long 'tis like to be

*Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries*

These, in the day when heaven was falling,  
The hour when earth's foundations fled,  
Followed their mercenary calling  
And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended;  
They stood, and earth's foundations stay,  
What God abandoned, these defended,  
And saved the sum of things for pay.

*'Tell Me Not Here, It Needs Not Saying'*

Tell me not here, it needs not saying,  
What tune the enchantress plays  
In aftermaths of soft September  
Or under blanching may,  
For she and I were long acquainted  
And I knew all her ways

On russet floors, by waters idle,  
 The pine lets fall its cone;  
 The cuckoo shouts all day at nothing  
 In leafy dells alone;  
 And traveller's joy beguiles in autumn  
 Hearts that have lost their own.

On acres of the seeded grasses  
 The changing burnish heaves;  
 Or marshalled under moons of harvest  
 Stand still all night the sheaves;  
 Or beeches strip in storms for winter  
 And stain the wind with leaves.

Possess, as I possessed a season,  
 The countries I resign,  
 Where over elmy plains the highway  
 Would mount the hills and shune,  
 And full of shade the pillared forest  
 Would murmur and be mine.

For nature, heartless, witless nature,  
 Will neither care nor know  
 What stranger's feet may find the meadow  
 And trespass there and go,  
 Nor ask amid the dews of morning  
 If they are mine or no.

## EDWARD THOMAS

### *Tall Nettles*

Tall nettles cover up, as they have done  
 These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough  
 Long worn out, and the roller made of stone  
 Only the elm butt tops the nettle now.

This corner of the farmyard I like most:  
As well as any bloom upon a flower  
I like the dust on the nettles, never lost  
Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

*The New House*

Now first, as I shut the door,  
I was alone  
In the new house, and the wind  
Began to moan.  
  
Old at once was the house,  
And I was old,  
My ears were teased with the dread  
Of what was foretold,  
  
Nights of storm, days of mist, without end;  
Sad days when the sun  
Shone in vain: old griefs and griefs  
Not yet begun.  
  
All was foretold me, naught  
Could I foresee;  
But I learned how the wind would sound  
After these things should be

CHARLOTTE MEW

*Sea Love*

Tide be runnin' the great world over.  
'T was only last June month I mind that we  
Was thinkin' the toss and the call in the breast of the lover  
So everlastin' as the sea.

Here's the same little fishes that sputter and swim,  
 Wi' the moon's old glim on the grey, wet sand;  
 An' him no more to me nor me to him  
 Than the wind goin' over my hand.

## J. E. FLECKER

### *The Old Ships*

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
 Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,  
 With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep  
 For Famagusta and the hidden sun  
 That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire,  
 And all those ships were certainly so old  
 Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,  
 Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,  
 The pirate Genoese  
 Hell-raked them till they rolled  
 Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold  
 But now through friendly seas they softly run,  
 Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,  
 Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,  
 Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn  
 And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,  
 A drowsy ship of some yet older day,  
 And, wonder's breath indrawn,  
 Thought I – who knows – who knows – but in that same  
 (Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new  
 – Stern painted brighter blue – )  
 That talkative, bald-headed seaman came  
 (Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)

From Troy's doom-crimson shore,  
And with great lies about his wooden horse  
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship — who knows, who knows?  
— And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain  
To see the mast burst open with a rose,  
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

*Yasmin*

A GHAZEL

How splendid in the morning glows the lily with what grace he  
throws

His supplication to the rose do roses nod the head, Yasmin?

But when the silver dove descends I find the little flower of  
friends

Whose very name that sweetly ends I say when I have said, Yasmin

The morning light is clear and cold. I dare not in that light  
behold

A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin.

But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway  
And some to Meccah turn to pray, and I toward thy bed, Yasmin,

Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul  
aswoon,

And harping planets talk love's tune with milky wings outspread,  
Yasmin

Shower down thy love, O burning bright! For one night or the  
other night

Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered flowers are dead,  
Yasmin

## SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

### *The War Films*

O living pictures of the dead,  
O songs without a sound,  
O fellowship whose phantom tread  
Hallows a phantom ground –  
How in a gleam have these revealed  
The faith we had not found.

We have sought God in a cloudy Heaven,  
We have passed by God on earth.  
His seven sins and his sorrows seven,  
His wayworn mood and mirth,  
Like a ragged cloak have hid from us  
The secret of his birth.

Brother of men, when now I see  
The lads go forth in line,  
Thou knowest my heart is hungry in me  
As for thy bread and wine:  
Thou knowest my heart is bowed in me  
To take their death for mine.

## RUPERT BROOKE

### *Heaven*

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;  
But is there anything Beyond?  
This life cannot be All, they swear,  
For how unpleasant, if it were!  
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
Shall come of Water and of Mud;  
And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
A Purpose in Liquidity.  
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
The future is not Wholly Dry.  
Mud unto mud! — Death eddies near —  
Not here the appointed End, not here!  
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
Is wetter water, slimmer slime!  
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One  
Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;  
And under that Almighty Fin  
The littlest fish may enter in  
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,  
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
But more than mundane weeds are there,  
And mud, celestially fair;  
Fat caterpillars drift around,  
And Paradisal grubs are found,

Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
And the worm that never dies.  
And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
There shall be no more land, say fish.

### *Desertion*

So light we were, so right we were, so fair faith shone,  
And the way was laid so certainly, that, when I'd gone,  
What dumb thing looked up at you? Was it something heard,  
Or a sudden cry, that meekly and without a word  
You broke the faith, and strangely, weakly, slipped apart?  
You gave in — you, the proud of heart, unbowed of heart!  
Was this, friend, — the end of all that we could do?  
And have you found the best for you, the rest for you?  
Did you learn so suddenly (and I not by!)  
Some whispered story, that stole the glory from the sky,  
And ended all the splendid dream, and made you go  
So dully from the fight we know, the light we know?

O faithless! the faith remains, and I must pass  
Gay down the way, and on alone. Under the grass  
You wait; the breeze moves in the trees, and stirs, and calls,  
And covers you with white petals, with light petals.  
There it shall crumble, frail and fair, under the sun,  
O little heart, your brittle heart; till day be done,  
And the shadows gather, falling light, and, white with dew,  
Whisper, and weep, and creep to you Good sleep to you!

## RUDYARD KIPLING

*'Cities and Thrones and Powers . . '*

Cities and Thrones and Powers,  
Stand in Time's eye,  
Almost as long as flowers,  
Which daily die  
But, as new buds put forth  
To glad new men,  
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,  
The Cities rise again.

This season's Daffodil,  
She never hears  
What change, what chance, what chill,  
Cut down last year's,  
But with bold countenance,  
And knowledge small,  
Esteems her seven days' continuance  
To be perpetual

So Time that is o'er kind  
To all that be,  
Ordains us e'en as blind,  
As bold as she  
That in our very death,  
And burial sure,  
Shadow to shadow, well persuaded, saith,  
'See how our works endure!'

## GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL ('A. E.')

### *Germinal*

Call not thy wanderer home as yet  
Though it be late.  
Now is his first assailing of  
The invisible gate.  
Be still through that light knocking. The hour  
Is thronged with fate.

To that first tapping at the invisible door  
Fate answereth.

What shining image or voice, what sigh  
Or honied breath,  
Comes forth, shall be the master of life  
Even to death.

Satyrs may follow after. Seraphs  
On crystal wing  
May blaze. But the delicate first comer  
It shall be King.  
They shall obey, even the mightiest,  
That gentle thing.

All the strong powers of Dante were bowed  
To a child's mild eyes,  
That wrought within him that travail  
From depths up to skies,  
Inferno, Purgatorio  
And Paradise.

Amid the soul's grave councillors  
A petulant boy  
Laughs under the laurels and purples, the elf  
Who snatched at his joy,

Ordering Cæsar's legions to bring him  
The world for his toy.

In ancient shadows and twilights  
Where childhood had strayed,  
The world's great sorrows were born  
And its heroes were made.  
In the lost boyhood of Judas  
Christ was betrayed.

Let thy young wanderer dream on  
Call him not home.  
A door opens, a breath, a voice  
From the ancient room,  
Speaks to him now. Be it dark or bright  
He is knit with his doom.

## W. B. YEATS

### *The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland*

He stood among a crowd at Drumahair,  
His heart hung all upon a silken dress,  
And he had known at last some tenderness,  
Before earth made of him her sleepy care,  
But when a man poured fish into a pile,  
It seemed they raised their little silver heads  
And sang how day a Druid twilight sheds  
Upon a dim, green, well-belovèd isle,  
Where people love beside star-laden seas,  
How Time may never mar their faery vows  
Under the woven roofs of quicken boughs  
The singing shook him out of his new ease

He wandered by the sands of Lisadill,  
 His mind ran all on money cares and fears,  
 And he had known at last some prudent years  
 Before they heaped his grave under the hill,  
 But while he passed before a plashy place,  
 A lug-worm with its grey and muddy mouth  
 Sang how somewhere to north or west or south  
 There dwelt a gay, exulting, gentle race,  
 And how beneath those three times blessed skies  
 A Danaan fruitage makes a shower of moons,  
 And as it falls awakens leafy runes.  
 And at that singing he was no more wise.

He mused beside the well of Scanavin,  
 He mused upon his mockers; without sul  
 His sudden vengeance were a country tale,  
 Now that deep earth has drunk his body in;  
 But one small knot-grass growing by the pool  
 Told where, ah, little, all-unneeded voice!  
 Old Silence bids a lonely folk rejoice,  
 And chaplet their calm brows with leafage cool;  
 And how, when fades the sea-strawn robe of gold,  
 A gentle feeling wraps them like a fleece,  
 And all their trouble dies into its peace.  
 The tale drove his fine angry mood away.

He slept under the hull of Lugnagall,  
 And might have known at last unhurt and deep  
 Under that cold and vapour-turbulent sleep,  
 Now that old earth had taken him and all  
 Were not the worms that spied about his bones,  
 Proclaiming with a low and ready cry,  
 Of how God leans His hands out of the sky,  
 To bless that life with honey in His power,  
 That none may feel the power of quick decay,  
 And no one any leaf-rot need decay,  
 Until He burn up Nature with a fire  
 The man has found no comfort in the day.

*Meru*

Civilization is hooped together, brought  
Under rule, under the semblance of peace  
By manifold illusion, but man's life is thought,  
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease  
Ravening through century after century,  
Ravening, raging and uprooting that he may come  
Into the desolation of reality—  
Egypt and Greece good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!  
Hermits upon Mount Meru or Everest,  
Caverned in night under the drifted snow,  
Or where that snow and winter's dreadful blast  
Beat down upon their naked bodies, know  
That day brings round the night, that before dawn  
His glory and his monuments are gone

*Coole and Ballylee, 1931*

Under my window-ledge the waters race,  
Otters below and moor-hens on the top,  
Run for a mile undimmed in Heaven's face  
Then darkening through 'dark' Raftery's 'cellar' drop,  
Run underground, rise in a rocky place  
In Coole demesne, and there to finish up  
Spread to a lake and drop into a hole  
What's water but the generated soul?

Upon the border of that lake's a wood  
Now all dry sticks under a wintry sun,  
And in a copse of beeches there I stood,  
For Nature's pulled her tragic buskin on  
And all the rant's a mirror of my mood.  
At sudden thunder of the mounting swan  
I turned about and looked where branches break  
The glittering reaches of the flooded lake.

Another emblem there! That stormy white  
But seems a concentration of the sky,  
And, like the soul, it sails into the sight  
And in the morning's gone, no man knows why;  
And is so lovely that it sets to right  
What knowledge or its lack has set awry,  
So arrogantly pure, a child might think  
It can be murdered with a spot of ink.

Sound of a stick upon the floor, a sound  
From somebody that toils from chair to chair;  
Belovèd books that famous hands have bound,  
Old marble heads, old pictures everywhere;  
Great rooms where travelled men and children found  
Content or joy; a last inheritor  
Where none has reigned that lacked a name and fame  
Or out of folly into folly came. ,

A spot whereon the founders lived and died  
Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees,  
Or gardens rich in memory glorified  
Marriages, alliances and families,  
And every bride's ambition satisfied.  
Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees  
Man shifts about – all that great glory spent –  
Like some poor Arab tribesman and his tent.

We were the last romantics – chose for theme  
Traditional sanctity and loveliness,  
Whatever's written in what poets name  
The book of the people, whatever most can bless  
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme,  
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,  
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode  
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood

*Death*

Nor dread nor hope attend  
A dying animal;  
A man awaits his end  
Dreading and hoping all,  
Many times he died,  
Many times rose again,  
A great man in his pride  
Confronting murderous men  
Casts derision upon  
Supersession of breath,  
He knows death to the bone --  
Man has created death

## JULIAN GRENFELL

*Into Battle*

The naked earth is warm with spring,  
And with green grass and bursting trees  
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying, -  
And quivers in the sunny breeze,  
And life is colour and warmth and light,  
And a striving evermore for these,  
And he is dead who will not fight,  
And who dies fighting has increase

The fighting man shall from the sun  
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth,  
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,  
And with the trees to newer birth,  
And find, when fighting shall be done,  
Great rest, and fullness after dearth

All the bright company of Heaven  
Hold him in their high comradeship,  
The Dog-Star, and the Sisters Seven,  
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,  
They stand to him each one a friend;  
They gently speak in the windy weather;  
They guide to valley and ridge's end.

The kestrel hovering by day,  
And the little owls that call by night,  
Bid him be swift and keen as they,  
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,  
If this be the last song you shall sing,  
Sing well, for you may not sing another,  
Brother, sing.'

In dreary, doubtful, waiting hours,  
Before the brazen frenzy starts,  
The horses show him nobler powers,  
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,  
And all things else are out of mind,  
And only joy of battle takes  
Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,  
Not caring much to know, that still,  
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so  
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,  
And in the air death moans and sings;  
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,  
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

## ISAAC ROSENBERG

### *Returning, We hear the Larks*

Sombre the night is:  
And, though we have our lives, we know  
What sinister threat lurks there

Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know  
This poison-blasted track opens on our camp —  
On a little safe sleep.

But hark! Joy — joy — strange joy  
Lo! Heights of night ringing with unseen larks.  
Music showering on our upturned listening faces

Death could drop from the dark  
As easily as song —  
But song only dropped,  
Like a blind man's dreams on the sand  
By dangerous tides,  
Like a girl's dark hair, for she dreams no ruin lies there,  
Or her kisses where a serpent hides

### *Break of Day in the Trenches*

The darkness crumbles away —  
It is the same old druid Time as ever.  
Only a live thing leaps my hand —  
A queer sardonic rat —  
As I pull the parapet's poppy  
To stick behind my ear.  
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew  
Your cosmopolitan sympathies  
(And God knows what antipathies).  
Now you have touched this English hand

You will do the same to a German —  
 Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure  
 To cross the sleeping green between.  
 It seems you inwardly grin as you pass  
 Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes  
 Less chanced than you for life,  
 Bonds to the whims of murder,  
 Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,  
 The torn fields of France.  
 What do you see in our eyes  
 At the shrieking iron and flame  
 Hurled through still heavens?  
 What quaver — what heart aghast?  
 Poppies whose roots are in man's veins  
 Drop, and are ever dropping;  
 But mine in my ear is safe,  
 Just a little white with the dust.

## JOHN FREEMAN

### *Possession*

I saw you  
 I held you,  
 And surely I heard you:  
 But you were as far as any man living could be.

Though sometimes  
 I have seen you,  
 And touched you and heard you,  
 As together we walked and your sleeve now and then brushed  
 mine;  
 Yet you were then  
 Farther, farther

Than with body's absence —  
But who walks with you now while your thoughts are here and  
brush mine?

The slow waters  
Of three oceans,  
And the change of seasons,  
Between us are but as a new-leafy hawthorn hedge,

And I see you  
And hold you —  
But are you yet living,  
Or come you now nearer than any man living may be?

### *Caterpillars*

Of caterpillars Fabre tells how day after day  
Around the rim of a vast earth pot they crawled,  
Tricked thither as they filed shuffling out one morn  
Head to tail when the common hunger called.

Head to tail in a heaving ring day after day,  
Night after slow night the starving mommets crept,  
Each following each, head to tail day after day  
An unbroken ring of hunger — then it was snapt.

I thought of you, long-heaving, horned green caterpillars,  
As I lay awake. My thought crawled each after each,  
Crawling at night each after each on the same nerve,  
An unbroken ring of thoughts too sore for speech

Over and over and over and over again  
The same hungry thoughts and the hopeless same regrets,  
Over and over the same truths, again and again  
In a heaving ring returning the same regrets.

## W. H. DAVIES

### *The Truth*

Since I have seen a bird one day,  
His head pecked more than half away;  
That hopped about, with but one eye,  
Ready to fight again, and die –  
Oft-times since then their private lives  
Have spoilt that joy their music gives.

So, when I see this robin now,  
Like a red apple on the bough,  
And question why he sings so strong,  
For love, or for the love of song;  
Or sings, maybe, for that sweet rill  
Whose silver tongue is never still –

Ah, now there comes this thought unkind,  
Born of the knowledge in my mind:  
He sings in triumph that last night  
He killed his father in a fight;  
And now he'll take his mother's blood –  
The last strong rival for his food.

### *Dreams of the Sea*

I know not why I yearn for thee again,  
To sail once more upon thy fickle flood;  
I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,  
Thy salt is lodged for ever in my blood.

Yet I have seen thee lash the vessel's sides  
In fury, with thy many-tailèd whip;  
And I have seen thee, too, like Galilee,  
When Jesus walked in peace to Simon's ship.

And I have seen thy gentle breeze as soft  
As summer's, when it makes the cornfields run;  
And I have seen thy rude and lusty gale  
Make ships show half their bellies to the sun  
Thou knowest the way to tame the wildest life,  
Thou knowest the way to bend the great and proud  
I think of that Armada whose puffed sails,  
Greedy and large, came swallowing every cloud.  
But I have seen the sea-boy, young and drowned,  
Lying on shore and, by thy cruel hand,  
A seaweed beard was on his tender chin,  
His heaven-blue eyes were filled with common sand  
And yet, for all, I yearn for thee again,  
To sail once more upon thy fickle flood  
I'll hear thy waves wash under my death-bed,  
Thy salt is lodged for ever in my blood.

## HAROLD MONRO

*The Nightingale near the House*

Here is the soundless cypress on the lawn.  
It listens, listens Taller trees beyond  
Listen The moon at the unruffled pond  
Stares And you sing, you sing  
That star-enchanted song falls through the air  
From lawn to lawn down terraces of sound,  
Darts in white arrows on the shadowed ground,  
While all the night you sing  
My dreams are flowers to which you are a bee,  
As all night long I listen, and my brain  
Receives your song, then loses it again  
In moonlight on the lawn,

Now is your voice a marble high and white,  
Then like a mist on fields of paradise;  
Now is a raging fire, then is like ice,  
Then breaks, and it is dawn.

## WILFRED OWEN

*Insensibility*

## I

Happy are men who yet before they are killed  
Can let their veins run cold.  
Whom no compassion fleers  
Or makes their feet  
Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers.  
The front line withers,  
But they are troops who fade, not flowers  
For poets' tearful fooling:  
Men, gaps for filling  
Losses who might have fought  
Longer, but no one bothers.

## II

And some cease feeling  
Even themselves or for themselves.  
Dullness best solves  
The tease and doubt of shelling,  
And Chance's strange arithmetical  
Comes simpler than the reckoning of their shilling.  
They keep no check on Armies' decimation.

## III

Happy are these who lose imagination  
They have enough to carry with ammunition  
Their spirit drags no pack  
Their old wounds save with cold can not more ache  
Having seen all things red,  
Their eyes are rid  
Of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever.  
And terror's first constriction over,  
Their hearts remain small-drawn.  
Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle  
Now long since ironed,  
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned

## IV

Happy the soldier home, with not a notion  
How somewhere, every dawn, some men attack,  
And many sighs are drained  
Happy the lad whose mind was never trained  
His days are worth forgetting more than not  
He sings along the march  
Which we march taciturn, because of dusk,  
The long, forlorn, relentless trend  
From larger day to huger night

## V

We wise, who with a thought besmirk  
Blood over all our soul,  
How should we see our task  
But through his blunt and lashless eyes<sup>a</sup>  
Alive, he is not vital overmuch,  
Dying, not mortal overmuch,  
Nor sad, nor proud,  
Nor curious at all  
He cannot tell  
Old men's placidity from his

## VI

But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,  
That they should be as stones.  
Wretched are they, and mean  
With paucity that never was simplicity.  
By choice they made themselves immune  
To pity and whatever moans in man  
Before the last sea and the hapless stars;  
Whatever mourns when many leave these shores;  
Whatever shares  
The eternal reciprocity of tears.

*Exposure*

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us ...  
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent ...  
Low, drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient ...  
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,  
But nothing happens.

Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,  
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.  
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,  
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.  
What are we doing here?

The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow ...  
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.  
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army  
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,  
But nothing happens.

Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.  
Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow,  
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew,  
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,  
But nothing happens.

Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces –  
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-  
dazed,

Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,  
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses.

Is it that we are dying?

Slowly our ghosts drag home. glimpsing the sunk fires, glozed  
With crusted dark-red jewels, crickets jingle there,  
For hours the innocent mice rejoice the house is theirs,  
Shutters and doors, all closed on us the doors are closed, –  
We turn back to our dying.

Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;  
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.  
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;  
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here, therefore were born,  
For love of God seems dying.

To-night, His frost will fasten on this mud and us,  
Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp  
The burying-party, picks and shovels in their shaking grasp,  
Pause over half-known faces All their eyes are ice,  
But nothing happens.

## G. K. CHESTERTON

### *The Modern Manichee*

He sayeth 'there is no sin, and all his sin  
Swells round him into a world made merciless,  
The midnight of his universe of shame  
Is the vast shadow of his shamelessness  
He blames all that begat him, gods or brutes,  
And sires not sons he chides as with a rod.

The sins of the children visited on the fathers  
Through all generations, back to a jealous God.

The fields that heal the humble, the happy forests  
That sing to men confessed and men consoled,  
To him are jungles only, greedy and groping,  
Heartlessly new, unvenerably old.  
Beyond the pride of his own cold compassion  
Is only cruelty and imputed pain:  
Matched with that mood, a boy's sport in the forest  
Makes comrades of the slayer and the slain.

The innocent lust of the unfallen creatures  
Moves him to hidden horror but no mirth;  
Misplaced morality rots in the roots unconscious,  
His stifled conscience stinks through the green earth.  
The green things thrust like horrible huge snails,  
Horns green and gross, each lifting a leering eye  
He scarce can call a flower, it lolls obscene,  
Its organs gaping to the sneering sky.

Dark with that dusk the old red god of gardens,  
Still pagan but not merry any more,  
Stirs up the dull adulteries of the dust,  
Blind, frustrate, hopeless, hollow at the core;  
The plants are brutes tied with green rope and roaring  
Their terrible dark loves from tree to tree.  
He shrinks as from a shaft, if by him singing,  
A gilded pump and pandar, goes the bee.

He sayeth, 'I have no sin; I cast the stone',  
And throws his little pebble at the shrine,  
Casts sin and stone away against the house  
Whose health has turned earth's waters into wine.  
The venom of that repudiated guilt  
Poisons the sea and every natural flood  
As once a wavering tyrant washed his hands,  
And touching, turned the water black with blood.

*The Shipwrights*  
FROM 'FOR FIVE GUILDS'

The sea that is above the sky  
Low on it like a load did lie,  
The skies grew green and black and nigh  
And broke and the Flood came.  
But through the inky violet sea  
A candle-lighted ship went she  
Whose master made our Mystery  
With Noah for his name.

The high impossible horns and hair  
The beards of bestial kings were there.  
Birds of the East, red-gold and rare,  
Crowded the mast for crown.  
Grey giant birds stood gaunt and strong  
But over them sang all day long  
The little lark that makes a song  
A mile from London town

Hard as the world God nailed with stars  
That ship that on its decks and spars  
Carried the world and all its wars  
Troy and eternal Rome.  
Hard were old Noah's timbers found,  
And those we smite as hard and sound  
That shall have girt the green world round  
When all our ships come home

Redeem we from that world undone  
Huge stones that shall outshine the sun  
And crowns and bones of gods, o'errun  
With leprosies of foam.  
For God regathers his ancient rights  
And heaven itself has newer sights,  
Happier in all its harbour-lights  
When all our ships come home

## D. H. LAWRENCE

### *Kangaroo*

In the northern hemisphere  
Life seems to leap at the air, or skim under the wind  
Like stags on rocky ground, or pawing horses, or springy scut-tailed  
rabbits.

Or else rush horizontal to charge at the sky's horizon,  
Like bulls or bison or wild pigs.

Or slip like water slippery towards its ends,  
As foxes, stoats, and wolves, and prairie dogs.

Only mice, and moles, and rats, and badgers, and beavers, and  
perhaps bears  
Seem belly-plumbed to the earth's mid-*navel*.  
Or frogs that when they leap come flop, and flop to the centre of  
the earth.

But the yellow antipodal Kangaroo, when she sits up,  
Who can unseat her, like a liquid drop that is heavy, and just  
touches earth.

The downward drip  
The down-urge.  
So much denser than cold-blooded frogs

Delicate mother Kangaroo  
Sitting up there rabbit-wise, but huge, plumb-weighted,  
And lifting her beautiful slender face, oh! so much more gently and  
finely lined than a rabbit's, or than a hare's,  
Lifting her face to nibble at a round white peppermint drop, which  
she loves, sensitive mother Kangaroo.

Her sensitive, long, pure-bred face.  
Her full antipodal eyes, so dark,  
So big and quiet and remote, having watched so many empty  
dawns in silent Australia

Her little loose hands, and drooping Victorian shoulders,  
And then her great weight below the waist, her vast pale belly  
With a thin young yellow little paw hanging out, and straggle of a  
thin long ear, like ribbon,  
Like a funny trimming to the middle of her belly, thin little dangle  
of an immature paw, and one thin ear

Her belly, her big haunches  
And, in addition, the great muscular python-stretch of her tail

There, she shan't have any more peppermint drops  
So she wistfully, sensitively sniffs the air, and then turns, goes off  
in slow sad leaps

On the long flat skins of her legs,  
Steered and propelled by that steel-strong snake of a tail

Stops again, half turns, inquisitive to look back.  
- While something stirs quickly in her belly, and a lean little face  
comes out, as from a window,  
Peaked and a bit dismayed,  
Only to disappear again quickly away from the sight of the world,  
to snuggle down in the warmth,  
Leaving the trail of a different paw hanging out

Still she watches with eternal, cocked wistfulness!  
How full her eyes are, like the full, fathomless, shining eyes of an  
Australian black-boy  
Who has been lost so many centuries on the margins of existence!

She watches with insatiable wistfulness.  
Untold centuries of watching for something to come,  
For a new signal from life, in that silent lost land of the South.

Where nothing bites but insects and snakes and the sun, small life.

Where no bull roared, no cow ever lowed, no stag cried, no leopard screeched, no lion coughed, no dog barked,  
But all was silent except for parrots occasionally, in the haunted blue bush.

Wistfully watching, with wonderful liquid eyes.  
And all her weight, all her blood, dripping sack-wise down towards the earth's centre.  
And the live little-one taking in its paw at the door of her belly.

Leap then, and come down on the line that draws to the earth's deep, heavy centre.

### *Snake*

A snake came to my water-trough  
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,  
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree  
I came down the steps with my pitcher  
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom  
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down, over the edge of the stone trough  
And rested his throat upon the stone bottom,  
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small clearness,  
He sipped with his straight mouth,  
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long body,  
Silently.

Someone was before me at my water-trough,  
And I, like a second comer, waiting

He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do,  
And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do,

And flickered his two-forked tongue from his lips, and mused a  
moment,  
And stooped and drank a little more,  
Being earth-brown, earth-golden from the burning bowels of the  
earth  
On the day of Sicilian July, with Etna smoking.

The voice of my education said to me  
He must be killed,  
For in Sicily the black, black snakes are innocent, the gold are  
venomous

And voices in me said, If you were a man  
You would take a stick and break him now, and finish him off.

But must I confess how I liked him,  
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink at my  
water-trough  
And depart peaceful, pacified, and thankless,  
Into the burning bowels of this earth?

Was it cowardice, that I dared not kill him?  
Was it perversity, that I longed to talk to him?  
Was it humility, to feel so honoured?  
I felt so honoured

And yet those voices  
*If you were not afraid, you would kill him!*

And truly I was afraid, I was most afraid,  
But even so, honoured still more  
That he should seek my hospitality  
From out the dark door of the secret earth.

He drank enough  
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,  
And flickered his tongue like a forked night on the air, so black,  
Seeming to lick his lips,  
And looked around like a god, unseeing, into the air,  
And slowly turned his head,

And slowly, very slowly, as if thrice adream,  
Proceeded to draw his slow length curving round  
And climb again the broken bank of my wall-face

And as he put his head into that dreadful hole,  
And as he slowly drew up, snake-easing his shoulders, and entered  
farther,  
A sort of horror, a sort of protest against his withdrawing into that  
horrid black hole,  
Deliberately going into the blackness, and slowly drawing himself  
after,  
Overcame me now his back was turned.

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,  
I picked up a clumsy log  
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter.

I think it did not hit him,  
But suddenly that part of him that was left behind convulsed in  
undignified haste,  
Writhed like lightning, and was gone  
Into the black hole, the earth-lipped fissure in the wall-front,  
At which, in the intense still noon, I stared with fascination.

And immediately I regretted it.  
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!  
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human education

And I thought of the albatross,  
And I wished he would come back, my snake.

For he seemed to me again like a king,  
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,  
Now due to be crowned again.

And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords  
Of life.  
And I have something to expiate;  
A pettiness.

## LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

### *Epitaph*

Sir, you should notice me· I am the Man;  
I am Good Fortune: I am satisfied  
All I desired, more than I could desire,  
I have everything has gone right with me  
Life was a hiding-place that played me false,  
I croucht ashamed, and still was seen and scorned  
But now I am not seen. I was a fool,  
And now I know what wisdom dare not know  
For I know Nothing. I was a slave, and now  
I have ungoverned freedom, and the wealth  
That cannot be conceived. for I have Nothing.  
I lookt for beauty and I longed for rest,  
And now I have perfection· nay, I am  
Perfection· I am Nothing, I am dead.

## JOHN DRINKWATER

### *Moonlit Apples*

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,  
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those  
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes  
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then  
There is no sound at the top of the house of men  
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again  
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

To tombs unfathomably deep,  
While Rameses and Romeo  
And little Ariadne sleep.

## GERALD GOULD

### *'This is the Horror ...'*

This is the horror that, night after night,  
Sits grinning on my pillow — that I meant  
To mix the peace of being innocent  
With the warm thrill of seeking out delight—  
This is the final blasphemy, the blight  
On all pure purpose and divine intent —  
To dress the selfish thought, the indolent,  
In the priest's sable or the angel's white.  
For God's sake, if you sin, take pleasure in it,  
And do it for the pleasure. Do not say:  
'Behold the spirit's liberty! — a minute  
Will see the earthly vesture break away  
And God shine through.' Say: 'Here's a sin — I'll sin it,  
And there's the price of sinning — and I'll pay.'

### *'I am Frightened . . '*

I am frightened, sweetheart — that's the long and short  
Of the bad mind I bear: the scent comes back  
Of an unhappy garden gone to wrack,  
The flower-beds trampled for an idiot's sport,  
A mass of vermin batt'ning there, a mort  
Of weeds a-fester, all the green turned black,  
And through the sodden glades of loss and lack  
The dead winds blown of hate and false report.  
There was a music in the early air,  
When our young love was virgin as we were,

Ripe for the rose, new to the nightingale,  
But now two ghosts walk showing each to each  
The empty grace of ceremonious speech,  
And I am frightened, and the air is stale.

## HUMBERT WOLFE

### *Love is a Keeper of Swans*

Love is a keeper of swans!  
Helen, amid what dark wherries  
are you steering the silver boat  
that for all the love of Paris,  
and his lips against your throat,  
passed out of Troy with windless vans?  
And, fairest of Italians,  
where do you glimmer, Beatrice?  
what light of heaven stains your wings  
with gold that were all fleur de lys?  
And do you hear when Dante sings?  
'Love is a keeper of swans.'

Love is a keeper of swans.  
Have you left the barren plain,  
and stormed a gold-eagle's eyrie?  
Queen-swan of the eagle stram,  
what mountain has you, Mary?  
and is its name, as ever, still romance?  
And you, bright cygnet of immortal Hans,  
you need not join your sisters yet  
You have all time. Why should you hasten?  
What though the lake with reeds be set,  
one reed is murmuring, oh, listen!  
'Love is a keeper of swans.'

## ARTHUR SYMONS

### *Palm Sunday: Naples*

Because it is the day of Palms,  
Carry a palm for me,  
Carry a palm in Santa Chiara,  
And I will watch the sea;  
There are no palms in Santa Chiara  
To-day or any day for me.

I sit and watch the little sail  
Lean side-ways on the sea,  
The sea is blue from here to Sorrento  
And the sea-wind comes to me,  
And I see the white clouds lift from Sorrento  
And the dark sail lean upon the sea.

I have grown tired of all these things,  
And what is left for me?  
I have no place in Santa Chiara,  
There is no peace upon the sea;  
But carry a palm in Santa Chiara,  
Carry a palm for me.

## LAURENCE BINYON

### FROM *Tristram's End*

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night  
On to that shore roll slow,  
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,  
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge

For ever out of unexhausted might,  
Lifting their voice below  
Tuned to no human dirge,  
Nor from their majesty of music bend  
To wail for beauty's end  
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;  
Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil  
To weeping eyes their woe,  
The dawn that doth not know  
What the dark night hath wrought,  
And over the far wave comes pacing pale,  
Of all that she reveals regarding nought. —  
But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread,  
Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,  
Sleepless with dread,  
Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,  
Till from afar the salt scent of the air  
Blows on her brow, and now  
In that pale space beyond the open door  
What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair  
By keen degrees aware  
That with the dawn her widowhood is there<sup>2</sup>

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear  
Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,  
Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,  
Not silence drear!  
Not to be vanquished so  
By silence on the lips that were so dear!  
Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face  
That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,  
Another face she knows not, yet knows well,  
Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,  
Propping it where it fell  
In a vain tenderness,  
But dead, — her great dream-hated rival dead,  
Invulnerably dead,

Dead as her love, and cold,  
And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.  
She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,  
And love, long-baffled, surges back again  
Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,  
While the tears blindly rain,  
'I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I  
That for his dear sake had been glad to die.  
I loved him not enough, I could not keep  
His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!  
I cannot touch him. Will none set him free  
From those, those other arms and give him me?  
Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.  
He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,  
Not mine, not mine!  
I loved him not enough, I could not hold  
My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.  
I had not any care  
To keep him from the darkness and the cold.  
O all my wretched servants, where were ye?  
Hath none in my house tended him but she?  
Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?  
Come hither, laggards all!  
Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare  
Upon your lord, 'tis he!  
Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.  
And set me out within the hall a bier,  
And wedding robes, the costliest that are  
In all my house, prepare,  
And lay upon the silks these princely dead,  
And bid the sailors take that funeral bed  
And set it in the ship, and put to sea,  
And north to Cornwall steer.  
Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.  
Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!  
Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,  
Not mine, not mine, not mine!

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.  
The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!  
No light hath his eye seen  
Since she is gone, no pleasure, he grows gray,  
His knights apart make merry and wassail,  
With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play,  
But he sits solitary all the day,  
Thinking of what hath been.  
And now through all the castle rings a wail,  
The king arises, all his knights are dumb,  
The queen, the queen is come  
Not as she came of old,  
Sweeping with gesture proud  
To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,  
And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,  
And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold,  
But mute she comes and cold,  
Borne on a bier, apparelled in a shroud,  
Daisies about her sprinkled, and now bowed  
Is her lord's head, and hushing upon all  
Thoughts of sorrow fall,  
As the snow softly, without any word,  
And every breast is stirred  
With wonder in its weeping,  
For by her sleeping side,  
In that long sleep no morning shall divide,  
Is Tristram sleeping;  
Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore  
That he would clasp his dear love never more,  
And sailed far over sea  
Far from his bliss and shame,  
And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany  
And to uncloud at last the glory of his name  
Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,  
Come again home  
In all men's sight, as when of old they came,  
And Tristram led Isoult, another's bride,

True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,  
And silver trumpets blew  
To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,  
And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried  
On Tristram's name anew,  
Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long  
On them that wrought him wrong,  
Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes  
Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:  
Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.  
'Beautiful ever, O Isolt, wast thou,  
And beautiful art thou now,  
Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,  
Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;  
But this is the last reproach, and this the last  
Forgiveness that thou hast.  
Lost is the lost, Isolt, and past the past!  
O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide  
Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,  
Nor need to wrestle sore  
With thy great love and with thy fixed oath,  
For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,  
Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.  
Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad,  
But I lack all things that I ever had,  
My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage,  
And empty is the house of my old age.  
Behold, I have laboured all my days to part  
These two, that were the dearest to my heart  
Isolt, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,  
My treasure, that I found so very fair,  
The treasure I had taken with a snare  
To keep thee mine, thus was my life's delight.  
And now the end is come, alone I stand,  
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand '

*Nothing is Enough.*

Nothing is enough!  
 No, though our all be spent —  
 Heart's extremest love,  
 Spirit's whole intent,  
 All that nerve can feel,  
 All that brain invent, —  
 Still beyond appeal  
 Will Divine Desire  
 Yet more excellent  
 Precious cost require  
 Of this mortal stuff, —  
 Never be content  
 Till ourselves be fire,  
 Nothing is enough!

*FROM The Idols*

Once, only once, never again, never,  
 The idle curve my hand traces in air,  
 The first flush on the cloud lost in the morning's height,  
 Meeting of the eyes and tremble of delight,  
 Before the heart is aware  
 Gone! to return never again, never!

Futurity flows toward me, all things come  
 Smooth-flowing, and ere this pulse beat they are bound  
 In fixity that no repenting power can free,  
 They are with Egypt and with Nineveh,  
 Cold as a grave in the ground;  
 And still, undated, all things toward me come.

Why is all stranger? Why do I not grow used?  
 The ripple upon the stream that nothing stays,  
 The bough above, in glory of warm light waving slow,  
 Trouble me, enchant me, as with the stream I flow

Lost into the endless days.  
Why is all strange? Why do I not grow used?

Eternity! Where heard I that still word?  
Like one that, moving through a foreign street,  
Has felt upon him bent from far some earnest look,  
Yet sees not whence, and feigns that he mistook,  
I marvel at my own heart-beat.  
Eternity! how learnt I that far word?

## HILAIRE BELLOC

### *Hannaker Mill*

Sally is gone that was so kindly,  
Sally is gone from Hannaker Hill  
And the briar grows ever since then so blindly  
And ever since then the clippings fall,  
And the sweeps have fallen from Hannaker Mill

Hannaker Hill is in desolation  
Ruin a-top and a field unploughed,  
And Spirits that call on a falling anemone,  
Spirits that loved her calling abroad  
Spirits abroad in a windy cloud

Spirits that call and no one answers,  
Hannaker's down and E. J. D. D. D.  
Wind and thistle for poppy and daisy,  
And never a ploughman to till the soil,  
Never a ploughman. Never a

## T. STURGE MOORE

### *Reason Enough*

'Who knows what a man may think?  
To whom do the birds confide  
Whether she will have tears to drink  
And an hungry heart to hide?  
Come, bandage your eyes,  
Give ear though he lies  
For milkmaids and queens and gipsy-princesses  
Dream and kiss blindfold or starve upon guesses '

She sang these words and curtseyed my heart said  
That though all heard my face alone was red, -  
Though all hands clapped her mine alone kept still, -  
Yet I perchance to praise had the best will  
Now sails she, like a spirit taking leave,  
Through those glass doors to where the gardens gloom  
While dim stars filter through the filmy eve  
Would she walk lonely through sweet solemn places?  
She should be viewed while their spell on her face is,  
Break free, my soul, good manners are thy tomb!

## WALTER DE LA MARE

### *The Scribe*

What lovely things  
Thy hand hath made  
The smooth-plumed bird  
In its emerald shade,

The seed of the grass,  
The speck of stone  
Which the way faring ant  
Surs – and hastes on !

Though I should sit  
By some tarn in thy hills,  
Using its ink  
As the spirit wills  
To write of Earth's wonder,  
Its live, willed things,  
Flit would the ages  
On soundless wings  
Ere unto Z  
My pen drew nigh,  
Leviathan told,  
And the honey-fly :  
And still would remain  
My wit to try –  
My worn reeds broken,  
The dark tarn dry,  
All words forgotten –  
Thou, Lord, and I.

### *The Cage*

Thou angel face! – like a small exquisite cage,  
Such as some old Chinese  
Once spent his love and skill on – youth to age  
In hope its destined prisoner to please,  
And then had empty left, since he had heard  
What death could do in setting free the bird.

### *Love Well*

When I be whole – and of old time  
Shall no more a lover be,

Nor the rain make lamentation  
 When the wind sighs,  
 How will fare the world whose wonder  
 Was the very proof of me?  
 Memory fades, must the remembered  
 Perishing be?

Oh, when this my dust surrenders  
 Hand, foot, lip, to dust again,  
 May these loved and loving faces  
 Please other men!  
 May the rusting harvest hedgerow  
 Still the Traveller's Joy entwine,  
 And as happy children gather  
 Posies once mine

Look thy last on all things lovely,  
 Every hour. Let no night  
 Seal thy sense in deathly slumber  
 Till to delight  
 Thou have paid thy utmost blessing,  
 Since that all things thou wouldst praise  
 Beauty took from those who loved them  
 In other days.

*The Song of the Mad Prince*

Who said, 'Peacock Pie'?  
 The old King to the sparrow  
 Who said, 'Crops are ripe'?  
 Rust to the harrow  
 Who said, 'Where sleeps she now?'  
 Where rests she now her head,  
 Bathed in eve's loveliness? —  
 That's what I said

Who said, 'Ay, mum's the word?'  
 Sexton to willow

Who said, 'Green dusk for dreams,  
 Moss for a pillow'?  
 Who said, 'All Time's delight  
 Hath she for narrow bed,  
 Life's troubled bubble broken'?  
 That's what I said.

## GORDON BOTTOMLEY

### *Eager Spring*

Whirl, snow, on the blackbird's chatter;  
 You will not hinder his song to come.  
 East wind, Sleepless, you cannot scatter  
 Quince-bud, almond-bud,  
 Little grape-hyacinth's  
 Clustering brood,  
 Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.  
 No half-born stalk of a lily stops;  
 There is sap in the storm-torn bush,  
 And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred cop  
 'Pity to wait' sings a thrush.

Love, there are few Springs left for us;  
 They go, and the count of them as they go  
 Makes surer the count that is left for us.  
 More than the East wind, more than the snow  
 I would put back these hours that bring  
 Buds and bees and are lost;  
 I would hold the night and the frost,  
 To save for us one more Spring

*'I am Tired of the Wind - . . '*

I am tired of the wind -  
 Oh, wind, wind, be quiet ...

I am burdened by the days  
Of wailing and long riot.  
The heavy trees are thinned,  
The clouds lose their ways ...  
There's no rest in my mind

When the wind falls the rain falls,  
The air has no more breath.  
The ceaseless 'Hush' of rain  
Is what eternity saith  
The hills grown near and tall  
Let down a misty mane ...  
Endlessness weighs on all.

## JOHN MASEFIELD

### *The Yarn of the 'Loch Achray'*

The *Loch Achray* was a clipper tall  
With seven-and-twenty hands in all  
Twenty to hand and reef and haul,  
A skipper to sail and mates to bawl  
'Tally on to the tackle-fall,  
Heave now 'n' start her, heave 'n' pawl!  
Hear the yarn of a sailor,  
An old yarn learned at sea

Her crew were shipped and they said 'Farewell,  
So-long, my Tottie, my lovely gell,  
We sail to-day if we fetch to hell,  
It's time we tackled the wheel a spell.'  
Hear the yarn of a sailor,  
An old yarn learned at sea.

The dockside loafers talked on the quay  
The day that she towed down to sea.

Nose between paws, to hear the surf  
Of wind in the beeches drowsily.  
There was our fox bred lustily  
Three years before, and there he berthed,  
Under the beech-roots snugly earthed,  
With a roof of flint and a floor of chalk  
And ten bitten hens' heads each on its stalk,  
Some rabbits' paws, some fur from scuts,  
A badger's corpse and a smell of guts

*Port of Holy Peter*

The blue laguna rocks and quivers,  
Dull gurgling eddies twist and spin,  
The climate does for people's livers,  
It's a nasty place to anchor in  
Is Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

The town begins on the sea-beaches,  
And the town's mad with the stinging flies,  
The drinking water's mostly leeches,  
It's a far remove from Paradise  
Is Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting,  
And quiet graves in the sea slime,  
Stabbing, of course, and rum-hitting,  
Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

All the day the wind's blowing  
From the sick swamp below the hulls,

All the night the plague's growing,  
And the dawn brings the fever chills,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter.

You get a thirst there's no slaking,  
You get the chills and fever-shakes,  
Tongue yellow and head aching,  
And then the sleep that never wakes  
And all the year the heat's baking,  
The sea rots and the earth quakes,  
In Spanish port,  
Fever port,  
Port of Holy Peter

## WILFRID GIBSON

### *By the Weir*

A scent of esparto grass — and again I recall  
The hour we spent by the weir of the paper-mill,  
Watching together the curving thunderous fall  
Of frothing amber, bemused by the roar until  
My mind was as blank as the speckless sheets that wound  
On the hot steel ironing rollers perpetually turning  
In the humming dark rooms of the mill—all sense and discerning  
By the stunning and dazzling oblivion of hill-waters drowned

And my heart was empty of memory, hope, and desire  
Till, rousing, I looked afresh on your face as you gazed —  
Behind you an old gnarled fruit-tree in one still fire  
Of innumerable flame in the sun of October blazed,  
Scarlet and gold that the first white frost would spill  
With eddying flicker and patter of dead leaves falling —

I looked on your face as an outcast from Eden recalling  
A vision of Eve as she dallied, bewildered and still,

By the serpent-encircled Tree of Knowledge that flamed  
With gold and scarlet of good and evil, her eyes  
Rapt on the river of life: then bright and untamed  
By the labour and sorrow and fear of a world that dies,  
Your ignorant eyes looked up into mine; and I knew  
That never our hearts should be one till your young lips had  
tasted

The core of the bitter-sweet fruit, and, wise and toil-wasted,  
You should stand at my shoulder an outcast from Eden too.

## OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY

### *Per Iter Tenebriosum*

Enough! Why should a man bemoan  
A Fate that leads the natural way  
Or think himself a worthier one  
Than those who braved it in the  
If only gladiators died,  
Or heroes, Death would be his  
But have not little maidens gone  
And Lesbia's sparrow — all alone

### *'Our Friends Go With Us*

Our friends go with us as we go  
Down the long path where Beauty leads,  
Where all we love forgathers, so  
Why should we fear to join our friends?

Who would survive them to outlast  
His children; to outwear his fame —

Left when the Triumph has gone past –  
To win from Age, not Time, a name?

Then do not shudder at the knife  
That Death's indifferent hand drives home,  
But with the Strivers leave the Strife,  
Nor, after Cæsar, skulk in Rome

## ALFRED NOYES

*Seagulls on the Serpentine*

Memory, out of the mist, in a long slow ripple  
Breaks, blindly, against the shore  
The mist has buried the town in its own oblivion  
This, this is the sea once more.

Mist – mist – brown mist; but a sense in the air of snow-flakes!  
I stand where the ripples die,  
Lift up an arm and wait, till my lost ones know me,  
Wheel overhead, and cry.

Salt in the eyes, and the seagulls, mewing and swooping,  
Snatching the bread from my hand,  
Brushing my hand with their breasts, in swift caresses  
To show that they understand

Oh, why are you so afraid? We are all of us exiles!  
Wheel back in your clamorous rings!  
We have all of us lost the sea, and we all remember  
But you – have wings

## HERBERT E. PALMER

### *The Fiddler and the Gurl*

But the root of the matter is I am growing old,  
And kicking at the barriers. There's grey in my hair,  
An ice-cold sediment dropping through my veins,  
My body has lost its spring, my brain its swiftness;  
Poor am I as a mouse in a timber-yard,  
And I am glad that there must come an End.

I lived on hope once; felt my spirit uplifted  
By some dream-prospect of established greatness,  
Hoped for a Crown and wore it, Power and was rich;  
Possessed through every misfortune and restraint;  
In Desolation was a kind of king.  
The regal Marlowe built not firmer than I,  
For Getting was just Hoping. Now Life's different.  
All's going away, fading, and slipping from me,  
And Death seems friendly.

But then, yesterday,  
As I sat fiddling on my slackened heartstrings,  
Brooding and biting, wishing Death would take me,  
In squalid disillusion of tired spirit  
Tracing upon the ever-perishing page  
"An acid sonnet with some malice in it,  
There stole on me a hand — as if from Heaven —  
Your hand. — You entered, and stood looking at me  
And now my fiddle-strings grow taut again,  
And there's sweet music nestling in the frame

So I can say, "To the winds with Hope! What's Hope!"  
Say it unscathed, set free from wrath and pain.  
What's Hope to me when the instrument is speaking!  
Only by this I pay my lease of life.  
My fiddle sings! Let hopes die where they soared.

Oh, I'll not chide you for your swift intrusion!  
Nor make you shy that you have given me kindness  
As senseless as the sun's tap on the lull  
Or the soft-footed south wind's wanderings.  
Heaven's sense it was, as sudden as wind or sun;  
Yet timely, just a touch from the blue sky.

And the root of the matter is I am growing old  
And you've half saved me — No! it is not Passion  
If it should ever shake you, make no sign,  
Nor let your thought run on my slain discretion  
That I should sing of you 'neath sun or star,  
You the Sun's flag, for I kneel down to the Sun  
And the whole curving radiance of blue sky,  
That breadth that holds all Wonder and pure Reason  
Though there's a stretch of severing years between us,  
Deep chasms of night and tired experience,  
You a fair child, and I pushed back by Time.

No! there's no union of our outward selves,  
The mortal trappings of the central sense,  
You so aglow, I withering, you the wild rose,  
Song's eglantine, the hyacinth cupola,  
Or the juniper, Elijah's cloaking tower,  
Any fair flower that's fragrant in the Spring,  
The Spring itself, and then the Sun of Spring

You were all that to me, like a maid to a lover,  
Touching my darkness with soft kindling fingers,  
The rays of your spirit shining through my spirit  
Till I was pinned to Heaven and the light again,  
I Earth's sad clod, and you a shaft from the Sun

How shall I thank you? Praise what lies beyond you  
And all about you, and in the heart of Day,  
Do it in this, the bow along the wire,  
Scattering a trail of music on the silence  
As I press forward, acolyte, and knowing

I can do nothing save respond and follow  
 As the Earth follows the Sun, yet does not follow —  
 Its worn face tilting to the fiery radiance —  
 Swinging around in the wide severing void.

But I'd speak plainer, change the speech's figure.  
 The body's between us, that's the actual severance,  
 Yet almost nothing if I break with Time  
 And let the clean stripped spirit touch the spirit.  
 In any thousand years what's death and change!  
 What's blight and age, or any sudden thing  
 That starts new life out of life's perishing!

There are no walls between us, only chasms,  
 The abysses of the flesh, the sinews' cleavage,  
 (Both voice and sight go out upon the uplands)  
 And these will close as they have closed before.  
 The Spirit-summit towers firm through Death and Change.  
 And I'll see plainer ere the century's gone,  
 And know what stole upon me in strange guise  
 For every Spring it comes — shakes me, then goes

### *Rock Pilgrim*

Let the damned ride their earwigs to Hell, but let me not join them.  
 For why should I covet the tide, or in meanness purloin them?  
 They are sick, they have chosen the path of their apple-green folly.  
 I will turn to my mountains of light, and my mauve melancholy.

Let their hands get the primrose — God wreath me! — of lowland  
 - and lagland,

For me the small yellow tormentil of heath-hull and crag-land.  
 Man's days are as grass, his thought but as thistle-seed wind-sown;  
 I will plod up the pass, and nourish the turf with my shin-bone.

I should stay for a day, I should seek in high faith to reclaim  
 them!  
 But the threadbare beat straw, and the hole in my shirt will enflame  
 them.

They are blinder than moles, for they see but the flies in God's  
honey.

And they eat off their soles; and they kneel to the Moloch of Money.

They have squeezed my mouth dumb, their clutch for a year yet  
may rankle

I will tie Robin Death to my side, with his claw on my ankle.

Let them come, stick and drum, and assail me across the grey  
boulders.

I will flutter my toes, and rattle the screes on their shoulders.

Let the damned get to Hell and be quick, while decision is early.

I will tie a red rose to my stick, and plant my feet squarely.

My back shall be blind on their spite, and my rump on their folly,

I will plod up the ridge to the right, past the crimson-green holly.

## JAMES JOYCE

### *Strings in the Earth*

Strings in the earth and air

Make music sweet,

Strings by the river where

The willows meet.

There's music along the river

For Love wanders there,

Pale flowers on his mantle,

Dark leaves on his hair

All softly playing,

With head to the music bent,

And fingers straying

Upon an instrument

## JAMES STEPHENS

### *The Centaurs*

Playing upon the hill three centaurs were!  
They lifted each a hoof! They stared at me!  
And stamped the dust!

They stamped the dust! They snuffed upon the air!  
And all their movements had the fierce glee  
Of power, and pride, and lust!

Of power and pride and lust! Then, with a shout,  
They tossed their heads, and wheeled, and galloped round,  
In furious brotherhood!

In furious brotherhood! Around, about,  
They charged, they swerved, they leaped!  
Then, bound on bound,  
They raced into the wood!

### *The Main-deep*

The long-rolling,  
Steady-pouring,  
Deep-trenchéd  
Green billów:

The wide-topped,  
Unbróken,  
Green-glacid,  
Slow-sliding,

Cold-flushing,  
— On — on — on —  
Chill-rushing,  
Hush — hushing,  
... Hush — hushing .

## ANDREW YOUNG

### *Last Snow*

Although the snow still lingers  
Heaped on the ivy's blunt webbed fingers  
And painting tree-trunks on one side,  
Here in this sunlit ride  
The fresh unchristened things appear,  
Leaf, spathe and stem,  
With crumbs of earth clinging to them  
To show the way they came,  
But no flower yet to tell their name,  
And one green spear  
Stabbing a dead leaf from below  
Kills winter at a blow.

### *Culbin Sands*

Here lay a fair fat land,  
But now its townships, kirks, graveyards  
Beneath bald hills of sand  
Lie buried deep as Babylonian shards  
But gales may blow again;  
And like a sandglass turned about  
The hills in a dry rain  
Will flow away and the old land look out,  
And where now hedgehog delves  
And cones hollow their long caves  
Houses will build themselves  
And tombstones rewrite names on dead men's graves

*Autumn*

The leaves hang on the boughs  
 Fiemot, ochreous,  
 Or fall and strangely greet  
 Green blades of winter wheat.  
 The long buds of the beech  
 Point where they cannot reach.

A sad Telemachus,  
 I stand under the boughs,  
 Patient Pēnelope,  
 Her heart across the sea,  
 Another year unweaves  
 Her web of wasted leaves.

Is bud and leaf and flower  
 All we are waiting for?  
 But we shall wait again  
 When these are gone, and then  
 When they are gone and gone  
 Penelope alone

## SIEGFRIED SASSOON

*Falling Asleep*

Voices moving about in the quiet house  
 Thud of feet and a muffled shutting of doors  
 Everyone yawning Only the clocks are alert

Out in the night there's autumn-smelling gloom  
 Crowded with whispering trees; across the park  
 A hollow cry of hounds like lonely bells:  
 And I know that the clouds are moving across the moon,  
 The low, red, rising moon. Now herons call

And wrangle by their pool, and hooting owls  
Sail from the wood above pale stooks of oats

Waiting for sleep, I drift from thoughts like these;  
And where to-day was dream-like, build my dreams.  
Music ... there was a bright white room below,  
And someone singing a song about a soldier,  
One hour, two hours ago and soon the song  
Will be '*last night*'; but now the beauty swings  
Across my brain, ghost of remembered chords  
Which still can make such radiance in my dream  
That I can watch the marching of my soldiers,  
And count their faces, faces, sunlit faces

Falling asleep the herons, and the hounds  
September in the darkness; and the world  
I've known, all fading past me into peace

*Presences Perfected*

I looked on that prophetic land  
Where, manifested by their powers,  
Presences perfected stand  
Whom night and day no more command  
With shine and shadows of earthly hours

I saw them Numberless they stood  
Half-way toward heaven, that men might mark  
The grandeur of their ghostlihood  
Burning divinely on the dark

Names had they none. Through spirit alone  
They triumphed, the makers of mankind,  
Whose robes like flames were round them blown  
By winds which raved from the unknown  
Erebus of earth's ancestral mind

## EDWIN MUIR

### *The Riders*

At the dead centre of the boundless plain  
Does our way end? Our horses pace and pace  
Like steeds forever labouring on a shield,  
Keeping their solitary heraldic courses.

Our horses move on such a ground, for them  
Perhaps the progress is all ease and pleasure,  
But it is heavy work for us, the riders,  
Whose hearts have flown so far ahead they are lost  
Long past all finding  
While we sit staring at the same horizon.

Time has such curious stretches, we are told,  
And generation after generation  
May travel them, sad stationary journey,  
Of what device, what meaning?

Yet these coursers  
Have seen all and will see all. Suppliantly  
The rocks will melt, the sealed horizons fall  
Before their onset – and the places  
Our hearts have hid in will be viewed by strangers  
Sitting where we are, breathing the foreign air  
Of the new realm they have inherited.

But we shall fall here on the plain.

It may be  
These steeds would stumble and the long road end  
(So legend says) if they should lack their riders.

But then a rider  
Is always easy to find. Yet we fill a saddle  
At least. We sit where others have sat before us  
And others will sit after us

It cannot be

These animals know their riders, mark the change  
When one makes way for another. It cannot be  
They know this wintry wilderness from spring  
For they have come from regions dreadful past  
All knowledge They have borne upon their saddles  
Forms fiercer than the tiger, borne them calmly  
As they bear us now.

And so we do not hope  
That their great coal-black glossy hides  
Should keep a glimmer of the autumn light  
We still remember, when our limbs were weightless  
As red leaves on a tree, and our silvery breaths  
Went on before us like new-risen souls  
Leading our empty bodies through the air  
A princely dream Now all that golden country  
Is razed as bare as Troy We cannot return,  
And shall not see the kingdom of our heirs

These beasts are mortal, and we who fall so lightly,  
Fall so heavily, are, it is said, immortal  
Such knowledge should armour us against all change,  
And this monotony Yet these worn saddles  
Have powers to charm us to obliviousness  
They were appointed for us, and the scent of the ancient  
leather  
Is strong as a spell So we must mourn or rejoice  
For this our seat, our station, our inheritance,  
As if it were all This plain all. This journey all.

### *The Journey*

First in the North The black sea-tangle beaches,  
Brine-bitter stillness, tablet strewn morass,  
Tail women against the sky with heads covered,  
The witch's house below the black-toothed mountain,  
Wave-echo in the roofless chapel,

A race whose fabled skill in falconry  
Was used on the small song-birds and a winged  
And blinded Destiny ... I think that only  
Winged ones know the highest eyrie is so lonely.

There in a land, austere and elegant,  
The castle seemed an arabesque in music;  
We moved in an hallucination born  
Of silence, which like music gave us lotus  
To eat, perfuming lips and our long eyelids  
As we trailed over the sad summer grass,  
Or sat beneath a smooth and mournful tree.

And Time passed, suavely, imperceptibly.

But Dagobert and Peregrine and I  
Were children then; we walked like shy gazelles  
Among the music of the thin flower-bells.  
And life still held some promise, — never ask  
Of what, — but life seemed less a stranger, then,  
Than ever after in this cold existence.  
I always was a little outside life, —  
And so the things we touch could comfort me,  
I loved the shy dreams we could hear and see —  
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,  
A little cold air wandering and lost

All day within the straw-roofed arabesque  
Of the towered castle and the sleepy gardens wandered  
We; those delicate paladins the waves  
Told us fantastic legends that we pondered

And the soft leaves were breasted like a dove.  
Crooning old mournful tales of untrue love.

When night came, sounding like the growth of trees,  
My great-grandmother bent to say good-night,  
And the enchanted moonlight seemed transformed  
Into the silvery tinkling of an old

And gentle music-box that played a tune  
Of Circean enchantments and far seas,  
Her voice was lulling like the splash of these  
When she had given me her good-night kiss,  
There, in her lengthened shadow, I saw this  
Old military ghost with mayfly whiskers, —  
Poor harmless creature, blown by the cold wind,  
Boasting of unseen unreal victories  
To a harsh unbelieving world unkind, —  
For all the battles that this warrior fought  
Were with cold poverty and helpless age —  
His spoils were shelters from the winter's rage.  
And so for ever through his braggart voice,  
Through all that martial trumper's sound, his soul  
Wept with a little sound so pitiful,  
Knowing that he is outside life for ever  
With no one that will warm or comfort him  
He is not even dead, but Death's buffoon  
On a bare stage, a shrunken pantaloon  
His military banner never fell,  
Nor his account of victories, the stories  
Of old apocryphal misfortunes, glories  
Which comforted his heart in later life  
When he was the Napoleon of the schoolroom  
And all the victories he gained were over  
Little boys who would not learn to spell

All day within the sweet and ancient gardens  
He had my childish self for audience —  
Whose body flat and strange, whose pale straight hair  
Made me appear as though I had been drowned —  
(We all have the remote air of a legend) —  
And Dagobert my brother whose large strength,  
Great body and grave beauty still reflect  
The Angevin dead kings from whom we spring,  
And sweet as the young tender winds that stir  
In thickets when the earliest flower-bells sing

The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.  
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices.  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.  
Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;  
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky,  
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.  
But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

*Rhapsody on a Windy Night*

Twelve o'clock.  
Along the reaches of the street  
Held in a lunar synthesis,  
Whispering lunar incantations  
Dissolve the floors of memory  
And all its clear relations,  
Its divisions and precisions,  
Every street lamp that I pass  
Beats like a fatalistic drum,  
And through the spaces of the dark  
Midnight shakes the memory  
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,  
The street-lamp sputtered,  
The street-lamp muttered,  
The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman  
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door  
Which opens on her like a grin.  
You see the border of her dress  
Is torn and stained with sand,  
And you see the corner of her eye  
Twists like a crooked pin '

The memory throws up high and dry  
A crowd of twisted things,  
A twisted branch upon the beach  
Eaten smooth, and polished  
As if the world gave up  
The secret of its skeleton,  
Stiff and white.  
A broken spring in a factory yard,  
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left  
Hard and curled and ready to snap

Half-past two,  
The street-lamp said,

'Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,  
Slips out its tongue  
And devours a morsel of rancid butter.'  
So the hand of the child, automatic,  
Slipped out and picketed a toy that was running along the quay  
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.  
I have seen eyes in the street  
Trying to peer through lighted shutters,  
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,  
An old crab with barnacles on his back,  
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,  
The lamp sputtered,  
The lamp muttered in the dark  
The lamp hummed.  
'Regard the moon,  
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,  
She winks a feeble eye,  
She smiles into corners.  
She smooths the hair of the grass.  
The moon has lost her memory.  
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,  
Her hand twists a paper rose,  
That smells of dust and eau de Cologne,  
She is alone  
With all the old nocturnal smells  
That cross and cross across her brain.'  
'The reminiscence comes  
Of sunless dry geraniums  
And dust in crevices,  
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,  
And female smells in shuttered rooms,  
And cigarettes in corridors  
And cocktail smells in bars.  
The lamp said,  
'Four o'clock,

Here is the number on the door.

Memory!

You have the key,

The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,

Mount

The bed is open, the tooth-brush hangs on the wall,

Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life.'

The last twist of the knife.

### *The Hollow Men*

A Penny for the Old Guy

#### I

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

Our dried voices, when

We whisper together

Are quiet and meaningless

As wind in dry glass

Or rats' feet over broken glass

In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,

Paralysed force, gesture without motion,

Those who have crossed

With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom

Remember us — if at all — not as lost

Violent souls, but only

As the hollow men

The stuffed men

#### II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams

In death's dream kingdom

These do not appear :  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer —

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

## III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Walking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone

## IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men.

## V

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

## FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

## LIFE IS VERY LONG

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence  
And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

## FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

## F. W. HARVEY

*Ducks*

## I

From troubles of the world  
I turn to ducks,  
Beautiful comical things  
Sleeping or curled  
Their heads beneath white wings  
By water cool,  
Or finding curious things  
To eat in various mucks  
Beneath the pool,  
Tails uppermost, or waddling

Sailor-like on the shores  
 Of ponds, or paddling  
 – Left! right! – with fanlike feet  
 Which are for steady oars  
 When they (white galleys) float  
 Each bird a boat  
 Rippling at will the sweet  
 Wide waterway.  
 When night is fallen *you* creep  
 Upstairs, but drakes and dillies  
 Nest with pale water-stars,  
 Moonbeams and shadow bars,  
 And water-lilies  
 Fearful too much to sleep  
 Since they've no locks  
 To click against the teeth  
 Of weasel and fox  
 And warm beneath  
 Are eggs of cloudy green  
 Whence hungry rats and lean  
 Would stealthily suck  
 New life, but for the mien.  
 The bold ferocious mien  
 Of the mother-duck.

## II

Yes, ducks are valiant things  
 On nests of twigs and straws,  
 And ducks are soothy things  
 And lovely on the lake  
 When that the sunlight draws  
 Thereon their pictures dim  
 In colours cool  
 And when beneath the pool  
 They dabble, and when they swim  
 And make their rippling rings,  
 O ducks are beautiful things!

But ducks are comical things —  
 As comical as you  
 Quack!  
 They waddle round, they do.  
 They eat all sorts of things,  
 And then they quack.  
 By barn and stable and stack  
 They wander at their will,  
 But if you go too near  
 They look at you through black  
 Small topaz-tinted eyes  
 And wish you ill.  
 Triangular and clear  
 They leave their curious track  
 In mud at the water's edge,  
 And there amid the sedge  
 And slime they gobble and peer  
 Saying 'Quack! quack!'

## III

When God had finished the stars and whirl of coloured suns  
 He turned His mind from big things to fashion little ones,  
 Beautiful tiny things (like daisies) He made, and then  
 He made the comical ones in case the minds of men  
     Should stiffen and become  
     Dull, humourless and glum.  
 And so forgetful of their Maker be  
 As to take even themselves — *quite seriously*.  
 Caterpillars and cats are lively and excellent puns.  
 All God's jokes are good — even the practical ones!  
 And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit  
 Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it.  
 And He's probably laughing still at the sound that came out of its  
 bill!

# W. J. TURNER

## *Romance*

When I was but thirteen or so  
I went into a golden land,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Took me by the hand

My father died, my brother too,  
They passed like fleeting dreams,  
I stood where Popocatepetl  
In the sunlight gleams

I dimly heard the Master's voice  
And boys far off at play,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Had stolen me away.

I walked in a great golden dream  
To and fro from school —  
Shining Popocatepetl  
The dusty streets did rule

I walked home with a gold dark boy  
And never a word I'd say,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
Had taken my speech away

I gazed entranced upon his face  
Fairer than any flower —  
O shining Popocatepetl  
It was thy magic hour :

The houses, people, traffic seemed  
Thin fading dreams by day,  
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi  
They had stolen my soul away!

*India*

They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle,  
The spotted jungle full of shapeless patches –  
Sometimes they're leaves, sometimes they're hanging flowers,  
Sometimes they're hot gold patches of the sun.  
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle!

What do they hunt by glimmering pools of water,  
By the round silver Moon, the Pool of Heaven? –  
In the striped grass, amid the barkless trees –  
The stars scattered like eyes of beasts above them!

What do they hunt, their hot breath scorching insects?  
Insects that blunder blindly in the way,  
Vividly fluttering – they also are hunting,  
Are glittering with a tiny ecstasy!

The grass is flaming and the trees are growing,  
The very mud is gurgling in the pools,  
Green toads are watching, crimson parrots flying,  
Two pairs of eyes meet one another glowing –  
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle.

*Silence*

It was a bright day and all the trees were still  
In the deep valley, and the dim Sun glowed;  
The clay in hard-baked fire along the hill  
Leapt through dark trunks to apples green and gold,  
Smooth, hard and cold, they shone like lamps of stone

They were bright bubbles bursting from the trees,  
Swollen and still among the dark green boughs;  
On their bright skins the shadows of the leaves  
Seemed the faint ghosts of summers long since gone,  
Faint ghosts of ghosts, the dreams of ghostly eyes.

There was no sound between those breathless hills.  
 Only the dim Sun hung there, nothing moved;  
 The thronged, massed, crowded multitude of leaves  
 Hung like dumb tongues that loll and gasp for air  
 The grass was thick and still, between the trees.

There were big apples lying on the ground,  
 Shining, quite still, as though they had been stunned  
 By some great violent spirit stalking through,  
 Leaving a deep and supernatural calm  
 Round a dead beetle upturned in a furrow.

A valley filled with dark, quiet, leaf-thick trees,  
 Loaded with green, cold, faintly shining suns,  
 And in the sky a great dim burning disc ! -  
 Madness it is to watch these twisted trunks  
 And to see nothing move and hear no sound !

Let's make a noise, Hey ! . . Hey ! . Hullo ! Hullo !

## OSBERT SITWELL

### *Prologue to England Reclaimed*

Now watch these phantoms,  
 How they tremble into being,  
 Amble, tremble into ample phantoms,  
 Tumble into their small wants  
 - Such few desires,  
 Garden, food, fires -  
 Watch these phantoms  
 How they now are being,  
 Listening hearing,  
 Looking see  
 Loving fear

While to tinge their moods, stiff-jointed moods,  
 The dumb, the sad, the sunset shadow  
 Of the old house broods  
 Alas, again, the ample phantoms tremble,  
 Tumble and crumble out of their few needs —  
 Crumble ... then crumple up.

*On the Coast of Coromandel*

On the coast of Coromandel  
 Dance they to the tunes of Handel,  
 Chorally, that coral coast  
 Correlates the bone to ghost,  
 Till word and limb and note seem one,  
 Blending, binding act to tone.

All day long they point the sandal  
 On the coast of Coromandel.  
 Lemon-yellow legs all bare  
 Pirouette to peruqued air  
 From the first green shoots of morn,  
 Cool as northern hunting-horn,  
 Till the nightly tropic wind  
 With its rough-tongued, grating rind  
 Shatters the frail spires of spice.  
 Imaged in the lawns of rice  
 (Mirror-flat and mirror green  
 Is that lovely water's sheen)  
 Saraband and rigadon  
 Dance they through the purring noon,  
 Whole the lacquered waves expand  
 Golden dragons on the sand —  
 Dragons that must, steaming, die  
 From the hot sun's agony —  
 When elephants, of royal blood,  
 Plod to bed through liled mud,  
 Then evening, sweet as any mango,  
 Bids them do a gay fandango,

Minuet, jig or gavotte.  
How they hate the turkey-trot,  
The nautch-dance and the highland fling,  
Just as they will never sing  
Any music save by Handel  
On the coast of Coromandel!

## RICHARD CHURCH

*Mud*

Twenty years ago  
My generation learned  
To be afraid of mud  
We watched its vileness grow,  
Deeper and deeper churned  
From earth, spirit, and blood

From earth, sweet-smelling enough  
As moorland, field, and coast,  
Firm beneath the corn,  
Noble to the plough;  
Purified by frost  
Every winter morn

From blood, the invisible river  
Pulsing from the hearts  
Of patient man and beast  
The healer and life-giver,  
The union of parts;  
The meaning of the feast.

From spirit, which is man  
In triumphant mood,  
Conquerer of fears,  
Alchemist of pain

Changing bad to good;  
Master of the spheres.

Earth, the king of space,  
Blood, the king of time,  
Spirit, their lord and god,  
All tumbled from their place,  
All trodden into slime,  
All mingled into mud.

## HERBERT READ

### *A Short Poem for Armistice Day*

Gather or take fierce degree  
trim the lamp set out for sea  
here we are at the workman's entrance  
clock in and shed your eminence.

Notwithstanding, work it diverse ways  
work it diverse days, multiplying four digestions  
here we make artificial flowers  
of paper tin and metal thread

One eye one leg one arm one lung  
a syncopated sick heart-beat  
the record is not nearly worn  
that weaves a background to our world.

I have no power therefore have patience  
These flowers have no sweet scent  
no lustre in the petal no increase  
from fertilising flies and bees.

No seed they have no seed  
their tendrils are of wire and grip

the buttonhole the lip  
and never fade

And will not fade though life  
and lustre go in genuine flowers  
and men like flowers are cut  
and withered on a stem  
And will not fade a year or more  
I stuck one in a candlestick  
and there it clings about the socket  
I have no power therefore have patience

*Bombing Casualties Spain*

Dolls' faces are rosier but these were children  
their eyes not glass but gleaming gristle  
dark lenses in whose quicksilver glances  
the sunlight quivered These blenched lips  
were warm once and bright with blood  
but blood  
held in a moist bleb of flesh  
not spilt and spatter'd in tousled hair.

In these shadowy tresses  
red petals did not always  
thus clot and blacken to a scar.

These are dead faces  
wasps' nests are not more wanly waxen  
wood embers not so greyly ashen

They are laid out in ranks  
like paper lanterns that have fallen  
after a night of riot  
extinct in the dry morning air

## LILIAN BOWES LYON

### *Pastoral*

This field has buried men; is browed  
With easy gold; day's Midas touch  
Turns all to richness, only these were ploughed  
By poverty under, pave a roofless church,  
Kindle no saffron cloud.

These nothing want, are nameless loam.  
But hungrier bones we knew as boys  
Stand gauntly erect, or ground to brittle scum  
Are grit in the machine that still destroys;  
And wolves sing Harvest Home.

On evening lea unearth long sighs,  
The lingering testament of their pain;  
Tear open this sepulchred acre until they rise  
And call Peace hypocrite, who dumbly stain  
With blood her pastoral skies.

## EDMUND BLUNDEN

### *The Pike*

From shadows of rich oaks outpeer  
The moss-green bastions of the weir,  
Where the quick dipper forges  
In elver-peopled crevices,  
And a small runlet trickling down the sluice  
Gossamer music tires not to unloose

Else round the broad pool's hush  
 Nothing stirs,  
 Unless sometime a straggling heifer crush  
 Through the thronged spinney where the pheasant whirs,  
 Or martins in a flash  
 Come with wild mirth to dip their magical wings,  
 While in the shallow some doomed bulrush swings  
 At whose hid root the diver vole's teeth gnash  
 And nigh this toppling reed, still as the dead  
 - The great pike lies, the murderous patriarch,  
 Watching the waterpit sheer-shelving dark,  
 Where through the splash his lithe bright vassals thread

The rose-finned roach and blush bream  
 And staring ruffe steal up the stream  
 Hard by their gluttoned tyrant, now  
 Still as a sunken bough.

He on the sandbank lies,  
 Sunning himself long hours  
 With stony gorgon eyes  
 Westward the hot sun lowers

Sudden the grey pike changes, and, quivering, poises for slaughter,  
 Intense terror wakens around him, the shoals scud awry, but  
 there chances  
 A chub unsuspecting, the prowling fins quicken, in fury he  
 lances,  
 And the miller that opens the hatch stands amazed at the whirl in  
 the water

*The Poor Man's Pig*

Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green  
 And apple-boughs as knarred as old toads' backs  
 Wear their small roses ere a rose is seen,  
 The building thrush watches old Job who stacks  
 The bright-peeled osiers on the sunny fence,  
 The pent sow grunts to hear him stumping by,  
 And tries to push the bolt and scamper thence,  
 But her ringed snout still keeps her to the sty

Then out he lets her run; away she snorts  
 In bundling gallop for the cottage door,  
 With hungry hubbub begging crusts and orts,  
 Then like a whirlwind bumping round once more;  
 Nuzzling the dog, making the pullets run,  
 And sulky as a child when her play's done.

## F. R. HIGGINS

### *Father and Son*

Only last week, walking the hushed fields  
 Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,  
 I came to where the road from Laracor leads  
 To the Boyne river – that seemed more lake than river,  
 Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds.

And walking longside an old weir  
 Of my people's, where nothing stirs – only the shadowed  
 Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air –  
 I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,  
 Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day  
 He walked, taking stock of herds huddled in their own breathing;  
 And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his hand;  
 Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in greeting  
 Old friends – the wild blades, when he gallivanted the land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks –  
 Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,  
 Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,  
 Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly  
 loved me  
 Till Death drew its grey blind down his face.

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways  
Are living shades of his rich calms and passions —  
Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes  
With whom now he is one, under yew branches,  
Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks.

## SACHEVERELL SITWELL

### FROM *Agamemnon's Tomb*

All is degradation in the chambers of dead bones,  
Nor marble, nor porphyry, but make it worse  
For the mind sees, inside it, to the stained wet shroud  
Where all else is dry, and only that is fluid,  
So are carven tombs in the core to their cool marble,  
The hollowed out heart of it, the inner cell,  
All is degradation in the halls of the dead,  
I never thought other things of death, until  
The climb to Mycenæ, when the wind and rain  
Stormed at the tombs, when the rocks were as clouds  
Struck still in the hurricane, driven to the hillside,  
And rain poured in torrents, all the air was water.  
The wet grey Argolide wept below,  
The winds wailed and tore their hair,  
The plain of Argos mourned and was in mist,  
In mist tossed and shaken, in a sea of wrack,  
This was the place of weeping, the day of tears,  
As if all the dead were here, in all their pain,  
Not stilled, nor assuaged, but aching to the bone;  
It was their hell, they had no other hope than this,  
But not alone, it was not nothingness  
The wind shrieked, the rain poured, the steep wet stones  
Were a cliff in a whirlwind, by a raging sea,  
Hidden by the rainstorm pelting down from heaven

To that hollow valley loud with melancholy;  
But the dark hill opened. And it was the tomb.

A passage led into it, cut through the hill,  
Echoing, rebounding with the million-ringing rain,  
With walls, ever higher, till the giant lintel  
Of huge stone, jagged and immense, rough-hewn  
That held up the mountain: it was night within:  
Silence and peace, nor sound of wind nor rain,  
But a huge dome, glowing with the day from out  
Let in by the narrow door, diffused by that,  
More like some cavern under ocean's lips,  
Fine and incredible, diminished in its stones,  
For the hand of man had fitted them, of dwindling size,  
Row after row, round all the hollow dome,  
As scales of fish, as of the ocean's fins,  
Pinned with bronze flowers that were, now, all fallen,  
But the stones kept their symmetry, their separate shape  
To the dome's high cupola of giant stone:  
All was high and solemn in the cavern tomb,  
If this was death, then death was poetry,  
First architecture of the man-made years,  
This was peace for the accursed Atridae.  
Here lay Agamemnon in a cell beyond,  
A little room of death, behind the solemn dome  
Not burnt, nor confined, but laid upon the soil  
With a golden mask upon his dead man's face  
For a little realm of light within that shadowed room.  
And ever the sun came, every day of life,  
Though less than star-point in that starry sky,  
To the shadowed meridian, and sloped again,  
Nor lit his armour, nor the mask upon his face,  
For they burned in eternal night, they smouldered in it,  
Season followed season, there was summer in the tomb,  
Through hidden crevice, down that point of light,  
Summer of loud wings and of the ghosts of blossom,  
One by one, as harvesters, all heavy laden,

The bees sought their corridor into the dome  
With honey of the asphodel, the flower of death,  
Or thyme, rain-sodden, and more sweet for that,  
Here was their honeycomb, high in the roof,  
I heard sweet summer from their drumming wings,  
Though it wept and rained and was the time of tears,  
They made low music, they murmured in the tomb,  
As droning nuns through all a shuttered noon,  
Who prayed in this place of death, and knew it not  
How sweet such death, with honey from the flowers,  
A little air, a little light, and drone of wings,  
To long monotony, to prison of the tomb!  
But he did not know it His bones, picked clean,  
Were any other bones The trick is in our mind-  
They love not a bed, nor raiment for their bones,  
They are happy on cold stone or in the aching water,  
And neither care, nor care not, they are only dead  
It once was Agamemnon, and we think him happy  
O false, false hope! How empty his happiness,  
All for a fine cavern and the hum of bees

FROM *Bohemund, Prince of Antioch*

We walked in lemon-woods  
And in the orange-grove,  
And climbed through cactus to the villa of the dwarves,  
Laid out like a mandoline  
A wall was the shell of it,  
A low, round wall  
With monsters on the sky-line, on the rim of it,  
In parody of statues on a colonnade  
Not saints but satyrs, figurants of sin  
Dwarves with antlers, Falstaffs of the shadows,  
Giants with donkeys' heads,  
Moustached Hussars,  
Most, with guitars, for a mocking serenade

And the villa, in the midst of them,  
With mirrored ball-room  
And statues of ancestors in suits of marble  
Talking from the walls;  
This was his world, his Palagonia,  
Who built the walls and had the statues cut,  
While Sicily lay round it  
With blue sea basking to the amber cliffs  
And all the Conca d'Oro, all the Golden Shell,  
Lit with winter light,  
To Palermo, glittering.  
Arabs brought the orange, brought the lemon to it,  
And Moorish melon-dome and stalactite,  
The desert honeycomb, the horn of plenty,  
And Orient silk from valleys of the mulberry;  
A Golden Age, soon faded, but the orange stayed  
More lovely than tamarisk, or asphodel,  
More lovely than the meadows of Theocritus,  
His olive-groves, or the shining of the ilex;  
And the Normans came to Sicily, the fair-haired race,  
And made this their paradise far from the North,  
As it was a heaven for the burning South,  
An oasis, an island, a snow-white mountain,  
Fire with a rind of snow  
But the Golden Age tarnished,  
The Hohenstaufen, dead,  
Were rust of their blood and spoilt the land for Aragon,  
The Norman race faded, there were no more heroes,  
Sicily was shut unto itself again,  
An isle of orange-groves, a name of poetry.

## RUTH PITTER

### *Of Silence and the Air*

Here where the cold pure air is filled with darkness  
graced but by Hesper and a comet streaming,  
censed by the clean smoke from a herdsman's hearthstone  
I stand with silence.

void of desire, but full of contemplation  
both of these herds and of the gods above them  
mindful of these, and offering submission  
to those immortal

Older than they, the frosty air about me  
speaks to the flocks like careful age, like winter,  
saying, Seek shelter to the gods, I know ye  
and to me nothing.

save but that silence is the truth the silent  
stars affirm nothing, and the lovely comet  
silent impending, like a nymph translated  
abides in heaven

Shall not I also stand and worship silence  
till the cold enter, and the heart, the housewife,  
spin no more, but sit down silent in the presence  
of the eternal?

## ROY CAMPBELL

### *The Zebras*

From the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers,  
Harnessed with level rays in golden reins,  
The zebras draw the dawn across the plains  
Wading knee-deep among the scarlet flowers.  
The sunlight, zithering their flanks with fire,  
Flashes between the shadows as they pass  
Barred with electric tremors through the grass  
Like wind along the gold strings of a lyre.

Into the flushed air snorting rosy plumes  
That smoulder round their feet in drifting fumes,  
With dove-like voices call the distant fillies,  
While round the herds the stallion wheels his flight,  
Engine of beauty volted with delight,  
To roll his mare among the trampled lilies.

### *Toril*

CROWD Another Bull! another Bull!

OX

You heard?

Your number's up: the people gave the word.

BULL

Feasted on flowers, the darling of the days,  
To-day I've ghastly asphodels to graze,  
Harsh sand to choke, and my own blood to swill,  
Whose dewlap loved the golden-rolling rill,  
When through the rushes, burnished like its tide,  
The lovely cirrus of my thews would slide,  
My heart flame-glazing, through the silken skin,  
Joy of its mighty furnace lit within.

These crescent horns that scimitared the Moon,  
These eyes that were the tinder of the noon —  
All now to be cut down, and soon to trail  
A sledge of carrion at a horse's tail!

Ox      Flame in the flaming noon, I've seen you run  
The Anvil of Toledo's now your Sun,  
Whose furious aurora they unfold,  
Beyond these gates, a roaring gale of gold,  
Whose iron clangs for you, whose dawn you feel,  
The target of its burnished ray of steel.

BULL    Ox as you are, what should you know of this  
Who never neared the verge of that abyss?

Ox      Ox as I am, none better knows than I  
Who led your father's father here to die  
Declaiming clown, I am the mute, the wise,  
Poets would read enigmas in my eyes  
My being is confederate with pain  
Mine to endure as yours is to complain,  
I am the thinker, satisfied to know,  
And bought this wisdom for a life of woe  
Be brave, be patient, and reserve your breath

BULL    But tell me what is blacker than this death?

Ox      My impotence

BULL    It was your soul that spoke —  
More hideous than this martyrdom?

Ox                      The Yoke!

## A. S. J. TESSIMOND

### *Earthfast*

Architects plant their imagination, weld their poems on rock,  
clamp them to the skidding rim of the world and anchor them down  
to its core;  
leave more than the poet's or painter's snail-bright trail on a friable  
leaf;  
can build their chrysalis round them — stand in their sculpture's  
belly.

They see through stone, they cage and partition air, they crossrig  
space  
with footholds, planks for a dance; yet their maze, their flying  
trapeze  
is pinned to the centre. They write their euclidean music standing  
with a hand on a cornice of cloud, themselves set fast, earth-square.

## C. DAY LEWIS

### *The Conflict*

I sang as one  
Who on a tilting deck sings  
To keep their courage up, though the wave hangs  
That shall cut off their sun.

As storm-cocks sing,  
Flinging their natural answer in the wind's teeth  
And care not if it is waste of breath  
Or birth-carol of spring.

As ocean-flyer clings  
To height, to the last drop of spirit driving on  
While yet ahead is land to be won  
And work for wings.

Singing I was at peace,  
Above the clouds, outside the ring  
For sorrow finds a swift release in song  
And pride its poise

Yet living here,  
As one between two massing powers I live  
Whom neutrality cannot save  
Nor occupation cheer.

None such shall be left alive  
The innocent wing is soon shot down,  
And private stars fade in the blood-red dawn  
Where two worlds strive.

The red advance of life  
Contracts pride, calls out the common blood,  
Beats song into a single blade,  
Makes a depth-charge of grief.

Move then with new desires,  
For where we used to build and love  
Is no man's land, and only ghosts can live  
Between two fires.

*'Oh Subterranean Fires . '*

Oh subterranean fires, break out!  
Tornadoes, pity not  
The petty bourgeois of the soul,  
The middleman of God!

Who runs farm and factory  
To keep a private mansion

Is a bad landlord, he shall get  
No honourable mention.

Who mobbed the kestrel out of the air,  
Who made the tiger tame,  
Who lost the blood's inheritance  
And found the body's shame,

Who raised his hands to brand a Cam  
And bless a submarine —  
Time is up; the medicine man  
Must take his medicine.

The winter evening holds her peace  
And makes a crystal pause,  
Frozen are all the streams of light,  
Silent about their source.

Comrade, let us look to earth,  
Be stubborn, act and sleep;  
Here at our feet the lasting skull  
Keeps a stiff upper lip.

Feeling the weight of a long winter,  
Grimaces underground;  
But never again will need to ask  
Why spirit was flesh-bound.

And we whom winter days oppress  
May find some work to hand;  
Perfect our plans, renew parts,  
Break hedges down, plough land.

So when primroses pave the way  
And the sun warms the stone,  
We may receive the exile spirit  
Coming into its own.

*A Time to Dance*

For those who had the power  
of the forest fires that burn  
Leaving their source in ashes  
to flush the sky with fire  
Those whom a famous urn  
could not contain, whose passion  
Brimmed over the deep grave  
and dazzled epitaphs  
For all that have won us wings  
to clear the tops of grief,  
My friend who within me laughs  
bids you dance and sing.

Some set out to explore  
earth's limit, and little recked if  
Never their feet came near it  
outgrowing the need for glory.  
Some aimed at a small objective  
but the fierce updraught of their spirit  
Forced them to the stars  
Are honoured in public who built  
The dam that tamed a river,  
or holding the salient for hours  
Against odds, cut off and killed,  
are remembered by one survivor.

All these But most for those  
whom accident made great,  
As a radiant chance encounter  
of cloud and sunlight grows  
Immortal on the heart  
whose gift, as the sudden bounty  
Of a passing moment, enriches  
the fulfilled eye for ever.  
Their spirits float serene  
above time's roughest reaches.

But their seed is in us and over  
our lives they are evergreen.

## RONALD BOTTRALL

### *To a Chinese Girl*

Your grapnel eyes dredging my body through  
Haul up the uncharted silt, efface  
The mud flats of impeding residue.

Thus trenching you rive up my yesterdays.  
Exposed to sun, your eastern sun, not mine,  
Compromise shrivels in Confucian rays.

Fidly proportioned pigments will combine  
In deeper values, but vague ampersands  
Choke the lacunæ of our strict design.

Unhurrying time our universe expands,  
We plot in vain the ever-changing centre,  
Our grain-concorded star-strewn cloud disbands

And we are left, ourselves our own tormentor.  
By dexterous montage photograms contrive  
To bill east-west cohering as a centaur.

And overtly strike off the imperial gyve,  
For the poised whip you have your amulet  
Blacking out details of your negative.

You decorously project a silhouette  
But piercing through the envelope I defined  
Clarity when your hair ran streaming jet,  
Irradiated by a luminous wind.

## WILLIAM EMPSON

### *Letter V*

Not locus if you will but envelope,  
Paths of light not atoms of good form,  
Such tangent praise, less crashing, not less warm,  
May gain more intimacy for less hope

Not the enclosed letter then, the spirited air,  
The detached marble, not the discovered face,  
I may praise so for truth as still for grace  
The humility that will not hear or care.

You are a metaphor and they are lies  
Or there true least where their knot chance unfurls;  
You are the grit only of those glanced pearls  
No acid now will melt back to small eyes

Wide-grasping glass in which to gaze alone  
Your curve bars even fancy from its gates;  
You are the map only of the divine states  
You, made, not known, nor knowing in, make known

\*

Yet if I love you but as cause unknown  
Cause has at least the form that it has shown,  
Or love what you imply but to exclude,  
That vacuum has your edge, your attitude

Duality too has its Principal,  
These lines you grant me may invert to points,  
Or paired, poor grazing misses, at your joints,  
Cross you on painless arrows to the wall

W. H. AUDEN

*'Hearing of Harvest ..'*

Hearing of harvest rotting in the valleys,  
Seeing at end of street the barren mountains,  
Round corners coming suddenly on water,  
Knowing them shipwrecked who were launched for islands,  
We honour founders of these starving cities,  
Whose honour is the image of our sorrow.

Which cannot see its likeness in their sorrow  
That brought them desperate to the brink of valleys,  
Dreaming of evening walks through learned cities,  
They reined their violent horses on the mountains,  
Those fields like ships to castaways on islands,  
Visions of green to them that craved for water.

They built by rivers and at night the water  
Running past windows comforted their sorrow;  
Each in his little bed conceived of islands  
Where every day was dancing in the valleys,  
And all the year trees blossomed on the mountains,  
Where love was innocent, being far from cities.

But dawn came back and they were still in cities,  
No marvellous creature rose up from the water,  
There was still gold and silver in the mountains,  
And hunger was a more immediate sorrow,  
Although to moping villagers in valleys  
Some waving pilgrims were describing islands.

'The gods', they promised, 'visit us from islands,  
Are stalking head-up, lovely through the cities,  
Now is the time to leave your wretched valleys  
And sail with them across the lime-green water,

Sitting at their white sides, forget their sorrow,  
The shadow cast across your lives by mountains.'

So many, doubtful, perished in the mountains  
Climbing up crags to get a view of islands;  
So many, fearful, took with them their sorrow  
Which stayed them when they reached unhappy cities,  
So many, careless, dived and drowned in water,  
So many, wretched, would not leave their valleys

It is the sorrow, shall it melt? Ah, water  
Would gush, flush, green these mountains and these valleys,  
And we rebuild our cities, not dream of islands

*'Look, Stranger, ...'*

Look, stranger, at this island now  
The leaping light for your delight discovers,  
Stand stable here  
And silent be,  
That through the channels of the ear  
May wander like a river  
The swaying sound of the sea

Here at the small field's ending pause  
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges  
Oppose the pluck  
And knock of the tide,  
And the shingle scrambles after the sucking  
surf, and the gull lodges  
A moment on its sheer side

Far off like floating seeds the ships  
Diverge on urgent voluntary errands,  
And the full view  
Indeed may enter  
And move in memory as now these clouds do,  
That pass the harbour mirror  
And all the summer through the water saunter

*To a Writer on His Birthday*

August for the people and their favourite islands.  
Daily the steamers sidle up to meet  
The effusive welcome of the pier, and soon  
The luxuriant life of the steep stone valleys,  
The sallow oval faces of the city  
Begot in passion or good-natured habit,  
Are caught by waiting coaches, or laid bare  
Beside the indiscriminating sea.

Lulled by the light they live their dreams of freedom,  
May climb the old road twisting to the moors,  
Play leapfrog, enter cafés, wear  
The tigerish blazer and the dove-like shoe  
The yachts upon the little lake are theirs,  
The gills ask for them, and to them the band  
Makes its tremendous statements; they control  
The complicated apparatus of amusement.

All types that can intrigue the writer's fancy,  
Or sensuality approves, are here  
And I, each meal-time with the families,  
The animal brother and his serious sister,  
Or after breakfast on the urned steps watching  
The defeated and disfigured marching by,  
Have thought of you, Christopher, and wished beside me  
Your squat spruce body and enormous head.

Nine years ago, upon that southern island  
Where the wild Tennyson became a fossil,  
Half-boys, we spoke of books and praised  
The acid and austere, behind us only  
The stuccoed suburb and expensive school  
Scented our turf, the distant baying  
Nice decoration to the artist's wish;  
Yet fast the deer was flying through the wood.

Our hopes were set still on the spies' career,  
Prizing the glasses and the old felt hat,  
And all the secrets we discovered were  
Extraordinary and false; for this one coughed  
And it was gasworks coke, and that one laughed  
And it was snow in bedrooms, many wore wigs,  
The coastguard signalled messages of love,  
The enemy were sighted from the Norman tower.

Five summers pass and now we watch  
The Baltic from a balcony; the word is love  
Surely one fearless kiss would cure  
The million fevers, a stroking brush  
The insensitive refuse from the burning core.  
Was there a dragon who had closed the works  
While the starved city fed it with the Jews?  
Then love would tame it with his trainer's look.

Pardon the studied taste that could refuse  
The golf-house quick one and the rector's tea,  
Pardon the nerves the thrushes could not soothe,  
Yet answered promptly the no-subtler lure  
To private joking in a panelled room,  
The solitary vitality of tramps and madmen,  
Believed the whisper in the double bed  
Pardon for these and every flabby fancy.

For now the moulding images of growth  
That made our interest and us, are gone  
Louder to-day the wireless roars  
Its warnings and its lies, and it's impossible  
Among the well-shaped cosily to flit,  
Or longer to desire about our lives  
The beautiful loneliness of the banks, or find  
The stores and resignations of the frozen plains.

The close-set eyes of mother's boy  
Saw nothing to be done, we look again

See Scandal praying with her sharp knees up,  
And Virtue stood at Weeping Cross,  
And Courage to his leaking ship appointed,  
Slim Truth dismissed without a character,  
And gaga Falsehood highly recommended,  
The green thumb to the ledger knuckled down.

Greed showing shamelessly her naked money,  
And all Love's wondering eloquence debased  
To a collector's slang, Smartness in furs,  
And Beauty scratching miserably for food,  
Honour self-sacrificed for Calculation,  
And Reason stoned by Mediocrity,  
Freedom by Power shamefully maltreated,  
And Justice exiled till Saint Geoffrey's Day.

So in this hour of crisis and dismay,  
What better than your strict and adult pen  
Can warn us from the colours and the consolations,  
The showy arid works, reveal  
The squalid shadow of academy and garden,  
Make action urgent and its nature clear?  
Who give us nearer insight to resist  
The expanding fear, the savaging disaster?

This then my birthday wish for you, as now  
From the narrow window of my fourth-floor room  
I smoke into the night, and watch reflections  
Stretch in the harbour. In the houses  
The little pianos are closed, and a clock strikes.  
And all sway forward on the dangerous flood  
Of history, that never sleeps or dies,  
And, held one moment, burns the hand.

## LOUIS MACNEICE

### *Perseus*

Borrowed wings on his ankles  
Carrying a stone death  
The hero entered the hall,  
All in the hall looked up  
Their breath frozen on them  
And there was no more shuffle or clatter in the hall at all.

So a friend of a man comes in  
And leaves a book he is lending or flowers  
And goes again, alive but as good as dead,  
And you are left alive, no better than dead,  
And you dare not turn the leaden pages of the book or touch the  
flowers, the hooded and arrested hours.

Shut your eyes  
There are suns beneath your lids  
Or look in the looking-glass in the end room  
You will find it full of eyes  
The ancient smiles of men cut out with scissors and kept in mirrors  
Ever to meet me comes, in sun or dull,  
The gay hero swinging the Gorgon's head  
And I am left, with the dull drumming of the sun suspended and  
dead  
Or the dumb grey-brown of the day is a leper's cloth  
And one feels the earth going round and round the globe of the  
blackening mantle, a mad moth

### *Iceland*

No shields now  
Cross the knoll,  
The hills are dull  
With leaden shale,

Whose arms could squeeze  
The breath from time  
And the climb is long  
From cairn to cairn.

Houses are few  
But decorous  
In a ruined land  
Of sphagnum moss;  
Corrugated iron  
Farms inherit  
The spirit and phrase  
Of ancient sagas.

Men have forgotten  
Anger and ambush,  
To make ends meet  
Their only business;  
The lover riding  
In the lonely dale  
Hears the plover's  
Single pipe.

And feels perhaps  
But undefined  
The drift of death  
In the sombre wind  
Deflating the trim  
Balloon of lust  
In a grey storm  
Of dust and grit.

So we who have come  
As trippers north  
Have minds no match  
For this land's girth,  
The glacier's licking  
Tongues deride

Our pride of life,  
Our flashy songs.

But the people themselves  
Who live here  
Ignore the brooding  
Fear, the sphinx,  
And the radio  
With tags of tune  
Defies their pillared  
Basalt crags.

Whose ancestors  
Thought that at last  
The end would come  
To a blast of horns  
And Gods would face  
The worst in fight,  
Vanish in the night  
The last, the first

Night which began  
Without device  
In ice and rocks,  
No shade or shape,  
Grass and blood,  
The strife of life,  
Were an interlude  
Which soon must pass

And all go back,  
Relapse to rock  
Under the shawl  
Of the ice-caps,  
The cape which night  
Will spread to cover  
The world when the living  
Flags are furled

*Song*

The sunlight on the garden  
Hardens and grows cold,  
We cannot cage the minute  
Within its nets of gold;  
When all is told  
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances  
Advances towards its end,  
The earth compels, upon it  
Sonnets and birds descend,  
And soon, my friend,  
We shall have no time for dances

The sky was good for flying  
Defying the church bells  
And every evil iron  
Siren and what it tells;  
The earth compels,  
We are dying, Egypt, dying.

And not expecting pardon,  
Hardened in heart anew,  
But glad to have sat under  
Thunder and rain with you,  
And grateful too  
For sunlight in the garden

## JOHN PUDNEY

### *First Drums Heard*

How will I hold myself  
how will I keep my stance  
now at the frontier of common sense  
now I am faced about  
to meet my chance?

Is it much easier  
to hold on with one's fear,  
to grip a rifle in the frightened air,  
crouched on the knees  
to wait the word to fire?

Would it be better thus  
with little more explained  
than where artillery is being trained,  
how to put on a mask  
if gas is in the wind?

It would be simple surely,  
hero in all opinions,  
to accept discipline in the battalions  
safe in the company  
of fearing millions?

How will I stand apart  
how will I keep my stance  
in the dark crisis of the present tense  
when I am face to face  
with every chance?

## BERNARD SPENCER

### *Allotments' April*

Cobbled with rough stone which rings my tread  
The path twists through the squared allotments.  
I who blink to glimpse the lark in the warming sun,  
In what sense am I joining in  
Such a hallooing, rousing April day,  
Now that the hedges are so gracious and  
Stick out at me moist buds, small hands, their opening scrolls and  
fans?

Lost to some of us the festival joy  
At the bursting of the tomb, the seasonal mystery,  
God walking again who lay all winter  
As if in those long barrows built in the fields  
To keep the root-crops warm On squires' lawns  
The booted dancers twirl. But what I hear  
Is spade slice in pebbled earth swinging the nigger-coloured loam.

And the love-songs, the mediæval grace,  
The fluting lyrics, 'The only pretty ring-time,'  
These have stopped singing For love detonates like sap  
Up into the limbs of men and bears all the seasons  
And the starving and the cutting and hunts terribly through lives  
To find its peace But April comes as  
Beast-smell flung from the fields, the hammers, the loud-speaking  
weir.

The rough voices of boys playing by the hedge,  
As manly as possible, their laughter, the big veins  
Sprawled over the beet-leaf, light-red fires  
Of flower pots heaped by the huts; they make a pause in  
The wireless voice repeating pacts, persecutions,  
And imprisonments and deaths and heaped violent deaths,  
Impersonal now as figures in the city news

Behind me, the town curves. Its parapeted edge,  
 With its burnt look, guards towards the river.  
 The worry about money, the eyeless work  
 Of those who do not believe, real poverty,  
 The sour doorways of the poor, April which  
 Delights the trees and fills the roads to the South,  
 Does not deny or conceal Rather it adds

What more I am; excited the deep glands  
 And warms my animal bones as I go walking  
 Past the allotments and the singing water-meadows  
 Where hooves of cattle have plodded and cratered, and  
 Watch to-day go up like a single breath  
 Holding in its applause at masts of height  
 Two elms and their balanced attitude like dancers, their arms like  
 dancers

## STEPHEN SPENDER

*'He will Watch the Hawk'*

He will watch the hawk with an indifferent eye  
 Or pitifully,  
 Nor on those eagles that so feared him, now  
 Will strain his brow,  
 Weapons men use, stone, sling and strong-thewed bow  
 He will not know.

This aristocrat, superb of all instinct,  
 With death close linked  
 Had paced the enormous cloud, almost had won  
 War on the sun,  
 Till now, like Icarus mid-ocean-drowned,  
 Hands, wings, are found.

With their St Vitus behaviour,  
Seeing beyond our noses  
A land never to flow with milk and honey,  
But winter a stonethrow off and no more roses.

And I imagine sometimes at night emerging  
The stunted pasty wonder of the slum,  
Like a cracked bicycle frame  
On which a short vocabulary is hung,  
To lift transparent hands to the amazing  
Sky and blow full-time

For he is mocked both in and out of season  
On this and all the other silly shores,  
And for this sin without compassion  
The sea shall have our heirs,  
And the nebulae climbing nowhere in the dark  
Know that this rural world is dead like Greek

## CHARLES MADGE

### *Solar Creation*

The sun, of whose terrain we creatures are,  
Is the director of all human love,  
Unit of time, and circle round the earth,

And we are the commotion born of love  
And slanted rays of that illustrious star,  
Peregrine of the crowded fields of birth,

The crowded lane, the market and the tower.  
Like sight in pictures, real at remove,  
Such is our motion on dimensional earth.

Down by the river, where the ragged are,  
Continuous the cries and noise of birth,  
While to the muddy edge dark fishes move,

And over all, like death, or sloping hill,  
Is nature, which is larger and more still

## LAURENCE WHISTLER

### FROM *The Burial*

The leader whom the people lost they laid  
With sad bands breathing to the blurring crowd  
And breath of thunder rolled in organ throats  
Three days tremendously asleep in stone,  
The house of horizontal majesty  
And cold great eyelids, recollecting well  
Much older crush and catafalque and fugue  
In flag-wreathed state he lay  
Isled in the awe of many whispering feet  
That breathed the ancient air with waves as with  
Eternal woe At each enormous hour  
Snored by the clock, a sudden shout of sound  
Trampled from brazen lips and trod the gloom  
Of listening arc and orifice and crashed  
With silver tribulation from the fans  
Flat to the pavement, and the silence growled  
Cities moved round him From the mumbling doors  
Still fingered, pant of motors and faint horns  
Were heard, remotely heard, when the wind crept  
And died for terror of the scarlet dusk  
Hung in proud sleep pumped up in cavernous gloom  
Uncorded, pumped enormous in pale night,  
Which, being breathed on, swayed a little this  
Way and that, being wakened (unawares!)

No sunlight crept. Beneath those pendant flames  
A sun had gone out of the world, and all  
These feet and eyes were gathered to the place  
Of their lost captain, while in fume-ranks  
The cars and coaches tore the humble turf  
Flashing their chromium under ancient trees  
Which cried, with not one shadow-twirling point,  
The black assassination of the heat,  
And revolution in revolting vats  
Of wind and rain: tyrannicide! Which came  
On the third day, when with all melancholy  
And not complaining sorrow, but with pride,  
They lifted him and carried him away  
In the projection of procession, far  
Caterpillared up valleys and foothills  
Into the sliding mountains which he chose  
(They said) his grave. There the appalling heights  
Rang down in bolt-up shadows, and it seemed  
The world had poured in lava, freckled plains,  
Cities and downs and the grey sleep of seas  
But in those mountains, formed as though a wave  
Had been transfixed in falling by the moon  
Napoleon of a million waves – dawn died  
Quickly in strangulation. Round the sun  
And round its first pre-natal glimmerings  
Pressing upon the night red ruin hung,  
Caverns of blood and froth of crimson doom  
That heralded the chastisement to be,  
Shattering lightning in the sulphurous wind!  
This they foretold and snatched the weeping sun  
Out of the cool blue hills into blood smoke  
And instantly grew pale like treachery,  
And darkened. From the grass the flame went out;  
Waterfalls aged, trunks blackened, boulders loomed  
In disillusion, valleys sighed like nuns  
And woke from dreaming they were lapped in gold,  
The haycock, and the hundred sainted stone

Pink-needling through the miles, vanished The wind  
Around that sombre spire tossed silver birds  
And caught the throb of shuddering breath, the bed  
Of harmony unheard through arch and aisle  
There, feet had stopped, the slur of wondering eyes;  
Only steps quick, official, crossed, recrossed,  
Staggered with a carpet's lolling folds,  
Marched in the grey aisles till the much-scratched air  
Quivered in dust and counterdust of echoes.  
No eyes slid up into the ashen sheaves  
Of pillars spread away in silver stalks  
Mistily intermingling, no one saw  
Crowned upon darkness the stern guilt regard  
Of volutes atlased with tremendous pride  
Of frieze and cornice over the bare place  
Once of the holy lustre and the cross  
Only these servants of the tyrant dead,  
Now tyrant, never before, who kept no soul  
To feed and glorify – but now at ease,  
Moved there Except as between life and death,  
Still as the dead, unstirring, six, his guard  
Who would not say Do this, or ever again  
Unite great realms, but only these, life, death

Outside the doors where anyone could see  
The starkness of the mighty corpse within  
Projected on their awful panels – roar  
Darkened one arc of eyes and banked up heads  
Unmoving Three slow channels poured their food  
Into that jug of men which drank and drank  
Although its lip stood crowned and quivering.  
Where the thick current, there the red flags moved,  
Mostly the scene hung still, dotted with flames  
Time rolled upon the clock's great tongue, and filled  
The wind with scattered birds Time thudded on  
In beams and gloomy stone unheard Time clicked  
To bayonets in a semicircle swept

By some colossal compass end to end  
The bannered steps and walled about with massed  
Men. Round the golden finger curved. More cold  
The wind ... A thousand streaming eyes ... Some looked  
At flying smoke. Some saw the giant spire  
Grey-vaulted, totter forward in its sleep  
Falling falling falling. The clock struck.

## GEORGE BARKER

*The Leaping Laughters*

When will men again  
Lift irresistible fists  
Not bend from ends  
But each man lift men  
Nearer again.

Many men mean  
Well: but tall walls  
Impede, their hands bleed and  
They fall, their seed the  
Seed of the fallen.

See here the fallen  
Stooping over stones, over their  
Own bones: but all  
Stooping doom-beaten.

Whom the noonday washes  
Whole, whom the heavens compel,  
And to whom pass immaculate messages,  
When will men again  
Lift irresistible fists  
Impede impediments  
Leap mountains laugh at walls?

*Epistle to a Friend*

What have I waited for the third of my life  
Any more than you have waited for, a great grave<sup>3</sup>  
When I heard the blue-eyed bird on the wave  
Trumpeting his courage over a wash of grief  
Keeping his cage and kingdom above the water,  
I wondered why not lay that wing low, lay  
That wing low, and lay that crest on the wave –  
Rest, rest, my fine fellow, for death is easy  
But he blows from his beak and braves the wave.

O feathery friend, I have found a friend  
Who tells me of a place where I shall find  
A feather heavy on my mouth and never mind.  
I shall lie quiet, sleeping above the wind  
O feathery friend with a flame in your hand  
Fighting for life in a fog of sorrow,  
Give up the ghost that echoes in the marrow,  
Leave the cage empty on the rotting strand,  
I know where to-day is as easy as to-morrow.

The weals where the whips stripped me at my shoulder  
Heal up and on my back I bear festoons of flowers;  
The cut is lips where I drink peace and power,  
And love, instead of growing older and colder  
Squanders its smile in a Cheshire grin, the smile  
The horizon has, meeting the vague of space  
And there I lie, not remembering even  
The times I crashed my head against heaven,  
Not remembering even a friend's face

Can I coerce you, O my fine feathery friend,  
Across the Andes and the world's siren fields  
Where women mourn for me before I come  
And dream of love with me when I am gone?  
Ecstatic world where you and I have kissed  
Touching in love's lucky tangent, now

I veer off like the banking plane, and below  
Glimpse the last shimmer of your wings in a mist.  
O Ecstatic world where we met, but might have missed!

I have a haven I carry in my hand –  
Death like a paradise poison in my pouch,  
Rendering me happy with its least touch.  
I have the heavenly key of a knife in my hand.  
I have a friend who in my worse need  
Will aid me with a blade stuck in my back,  
Giving me the kiss of death indeed.  
He is my friend who comes at the fatal beck  
And opens the great gates that nowhere lead.

O my fine friend, I have a gift to give,  
A pinch of dope to ease all your troubles.  
I carry death as surely as all alive,  
Contagious, incredible, acting at the double.  
When I have given you flowers and tokens,  
How happily the petty things you've taken –  
I have a better gift to give you now.  
What have you waited for the half of life,  
But the end of a life's grief?

When you were lost, what were you looking for?  
Or when you were absent, what was it from?  
Now you are lost, and looking for your home  
Now you are absent from the bliss of no more.  
Let me, my fine gay one, take you to my place,  
The great gap of absence where no one is:  
Let us lie down on the edge of that lake,  
Thinking a moment all that this poem is.  
Then we will go together into the bliss of this.

And when we wait a while on the verge,  
Taking a glance behind at the gay, going things,  
Giving our good-bye to our rememberings,  
Then, as one disrobes of clothes, we shall slip the urge,  
The bloody ache of being and going on being,

Loose off the rags of flesh and the mask of whom;  
The watch, the revolver, and the mirror of second being,  
Revert again to the air of the closed womb,  
And not feel the weight of the heavy tomb

O feathery friend with a fiend in your hand,  
Scotch him before he wears you to a tear,  
The great tear that lives because it quivers,  
The pearl of sorrow from his point of sand  
Give up the ghost that all men fear,  
The spirit of life that gives meat the shivers,  
O my fine feathery friend give me your hand –  
I am the ghost of a ghost that was never here  
I know the place for those without lives

## CLIFFORD DYMENT

### *A Switch cut in April*

This thin elastic stick was plucked  
From gradual growing in a hedge,  
Where early mist awakened leaf  
And late damp hands with spiral stroke  
Smoothed slumber from the weighted day  
While flowers drooped with colours furled.

I cut quick circles with the stick:  
It whistles in the April air  
An eager song, a bugle call,  
A signal for the running feet,  
For rising flyer flashing sun,  
And windy tree with surging crest.

This pliant wood like expert whip  
Snaps action in its voice, commands  
A quiver from the sloth, achieves

A jerk in buds, with stinging lash  
A spring of movement in the stiff  
And sleeping limbs of winter land.

Stuck plucked and peeled, companions lost,  
Torn from its rooted stock I hold  
Elate and lithe within my hand  
Winged answer to the wing's impulse,  
The calyx breaking into flame,  
The crystal cast into the light.

## DYLAN THOMAS

### *'The Force that Through the Green Fuse ...'*

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower  
Drives my green age, that blasts the roots of trees  
Is my destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose  
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever

The force that drives the water through the rocks  
Drives my red blood, that dries the mouthing streams  
Turns mine to wax.

And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins  
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool  
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind  
Hauls my shroud sail.

And I am dumb to tell the hanging man  
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head,  
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood  
Shall calm her sores

And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind  
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb  
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm

*'Where Once the Waters*

Where once the waters of your face  
Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows,  
The dead turns up its eye,  
Where once the mermen through your ice  
Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers  
Through salt and root and roe

Where once your green knots sank their splice  
' Into the tided cord, there goes  
The green unraveller,  
His scissors oiled, his knife hung loose  
To cut the channels at their source  
And lay the wet fruits low

Invisible, your clocking tides  
Break on the lovebeds of the weeds,  
The weed of love's left dry,  
There round about your stones the shades  
Of children go who, from their voids,  
Cry to the dolphined sea.

Dry as a tomb, your coloured lids  
Shall not be latched while magic glides  
Sage on the earth and sky,  
There shall be corals in your beds,  
There shall be serpents in your tides,  
Till all our sea-faiths die



## Biographical Notes

ASCHELLES ABERCROMBIE [1881-1938] (page 55). Educated at Malvern and Victoria University, Manchester Held lectureships in poetry and professorships of English Literature at one time or another in a number of English Universities His publications consist chiefly of poetry, plays and critical studies His *Collected Poems* were published in 1930

KENNETH ALLOTT [1912] (page 139) Has had verse published in *The Criterion*, *New Verse*, *Oxford Poetry*, *Contemporary Poetry and Prose* and other periodicals, and is joint author (with Stephen Tait) of a novel, *The Rhubarb Tree*, published by the Cresset Press, who are also the publishers of a volume of his poems

WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN [1907] (page 126) Educated at St Edmund's School, Gresham's School, Holt, and Christ Church, Oxford Associate Professor of English Literature, Ann Arbor University, Michigan, U S A Author of *The Orators*, *The Dance of Death*, *Look Stranger*, *Another Time*, *New Year Letter*, *For the Time Being*, *Tennyson*, and, in collaboration, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *The Ascent of F. 6*, *Letters from Iceland*, *On the Frontier* and *Journey to a War* In 1938 he edited the *Oxford Book of Light Verse*.

GEORGE BARKER [1913] (page 144) Contributor to *The Criterion*, *Orion*, *The New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, *The Listener* and numerous other periodicals and miscellanies. Among his books are *Alanna Autumnal*, *Poems*, *Janus*, *Calamuterror*, *Lament and Triumph* and *Sacred and Secular Elegies*

HILAIRE BELLOC [1870] (page 66) Educated at the Oratory School, Edgbaston and Balliol College, Oxford, where he took a 1st Class in Honour History Schools From 1906-10 he was Member of Parliament for Salford South. His first book was *Verses and Sonnets* 1895, which was followed a year later by *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts*. He has subsequently published many historical, biographical and critical works, and various volumes of essays, poems and humorous verses

LAURENCE BINYON [1869-1943] (*page 60*). Born at Lancaster. Educated at St Paul's School and Trinity College, Oxford, where in 1890 he won the Newdigate Prize. In 1893 entered the Department of Printed Books, British Museum, becoming later Keeper of Prints and Drawings. One of the greatest modern authorities on Oriental Art. Author of numerous books on Art, critical studies, plays and poems.

EDMUND CHARLES BLUNDEN [1896] (*page 110*). Born at Yalding, Kent. Educated at Christ's Hospital and Queen's College, Oxford. Served in the 1914 War with the Royal Sussex Regiment and obtained an M.C. In 1922 he was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for *The Shepherd*. From 1924 to 1927 he was Professor of English Literature at Tokyo University. In 1931 he received the Bendon Medal of the Royal Society of Literature. Since 1931 he has been Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Merton College, Oxford. Author of various prose works (including *Undertones of War*) and many volumes of poetry.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY [1874] (*page 70*). Born at Keighley. Educated at Keighley Grammar School. Author of many volumes of verse and plays, among which are *Poems of Thirty Years* and *King Lear's Wife*. In 1923 he was awarded the Femina Prize, Paris, and in 1925 the Benson Medal of the Royal Society of Literature.

RONALD BOTTRALL [1906] (*page 124*). Educated at Redruth County School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. Won the Charles Oldham Shakespeare Scholarship in 1927. In 1929 became Lecturer in English at the University of Helsinki, Finland, until 1931, when he was awarded a Commonwealth Fund Fellowship at Princeton University, U.S.A. In 1933 became Johore Professor of English Languages and Literature of Raffles College, Singapore, and in 1937 joined the staff of the British Institute of Florence. In 1939 became Secretary of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, was with the Air Ministry in 1940 and 1941 and is now with the British Council. His books include *The Loosening and Other Poems*, *Festivals of Fire*, *The Turning Path*, *Selected Poems* and *Farewell and Welcome*. He also edited, with his wife, *The Zephyr Book of English Verse*.

**ROBERT BRIDGES** [1844-1930] (*page 11*). Born at Walmer. Educated at Eton and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. After qualifying and practising as a doctor he finally gave up medicine for literature in 1882, by which time he had already published three volumes of poems. Numerous further volumes of poetry and plays and literary criticism followed and in 1913 Bridges was appointed Poet Laureate. His most important and impressive single work was his long philosophical poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, which he produced at the age of eighty-five, a year before his death.

**RUPERT BROOKE** [1887-1915] (*page 29*). Born at Rugby and educated at Rugby, where his father was a master, and King's College, Cambridge. He took part in the unsuccessful defence of Antwerp in 1914. In the following year, on his way to the Dardanelles, he died, and was buried on the island of Skyros. His first book of verses was published in 1911, another in 1915 and a volume of his collected poems in 1918.

**ROY DUNNACHIE CAMPBELL** [1920] (*page 118*). Born at Durban, Natal. Educated at Durban High School. Has lived largely in France and Spain and scored notable successes as a bull-fighter and in steer-throwing. Volunteered as a ranker and served with the Imperial Army in North and East Africa until disabled and discharged in 1944, became a B B C talks producer. His published works include *The Flaming Terrapin*, *Adamastor*, *The Georgiad*, *Taurine Provence*, *Broken Record*, *Flowering Rifle* and *Talking Bronco*.

**GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON** [1874-1936] (*page 47*). Born in London. Educated at St Paul's School. Entered journalism, publishing his first book, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems*, in 1900. *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* appeared in 1904, and during the last thirty years of his life a year rarely passed without his publishing one or more volumes of essays, verses, stories or critical studies. In 1922 he became a convert to Rome, and a number of his later books deal with the religious problems with which his vigorous mind became largely occupied.

**RICHARD CHURCH** [1893] (*page 107*). Was born in London. He was educated at Dulwich Hamlet School, and then, like his father and grandfather, entered the Civil Service. 'I loathed,' he says, 'the bureaucratic machine, its capture by the highly sterilized Fabian system, and all the backstair life of government and politics.' For twenty-four years, however, he carried on, occupying his evenings and early mornings with literary work until a breakdown in health necessitated his retirement from the Service and enabled him to devote his entire time to writing. He has published fourteen books of verse and seventeen of prose, and has contributed many critical articles and reviews to newspapers and periodicals. In 1937 he received the Femina-Vie Heureuse Prize for his novel *The Porch*.

**WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES** [1871-1940] (*page 42*). Born at Newport, Monmouthshire, of Welsh parents. Such education as he had was picked up from tramps in England and America and on cattle-boats on which he made nearly a dozen trips between America and England. Tramped for six years, then peddled laces and pins, varying this by occasional street-singing. His first volume of poems, *The Soul's Destroyer*, was published in 1907, and his famous *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* in the subsequent year. He was also the author of much other work, both prose and poetry.

**WALTER DE LA MARE** [1873] (*page 67*). Born in Kent. Educated at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School. His first book was *Songs of Childhood*, published in 1902. Since then he has published many volumes of poetry as well as verse for children (amongst the latter being *Peacock Pie*, which appeared in 1913), plays, novels and short stories.

**JOHN DRINKWATER** [1882-1937] (*page 55*). Educated at Oxford High School and Birmingham University. After twelve years as an insurance clerk he became one of the founders of the Pilgrim Players in which the Birmingham Repertory Theatre had its origin. His play, *Abraham Lincoln*, appeared in 1918, and his other plays include *Oliver Cromwell*, *Robert E. Lee* and *Bird in Hand*. He also published several books of poems and some biographies and critical studies.

CLIFFORD DYMENT [1914] (*page 147*) Born in Alfreton, Derbyshire Educated at elementary and secondary schools Worked as shop assistant, clerk and commercial traveller. Has contributed to many periodicals and anthologies, and is the author of four books of poems – *First Day* (1935), *Straight or Curly?* (1937), *The Axe in the Wood* (1944) and *Selected Poems* (1945).

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT [1888] (*page 93*) Born in St Louis, USA Educated at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Merton College, Oxford. Since 1913 he has lived mainly in London, where after a short time as a bank clerk he taught and lectured He is a director of the publishing firm of Faber and Faber Ltd In 1927 he was naturalized a British citizen In addition to his various volumes of poetry he has also published much important critical work, and is the author of several plays (including *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*) He was awarded an O.M. in the 1948 New Year Honours List.

WILLIAM EMPSON [1906] (*page 125*) Educated at Cambridge, where he distinguished himself in Mathematics and English Literature. Has occupied Chairs in English Literature at Universities in Japan and China Member of B B C staff 1940–7, Chinese editor in Far Eastern Service Left B B C. to return to China as representative of the British Council His poetry has appeared under the imprints of Chatto and Windus and Faber and Faber.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER [1884–1915] (*page 26*) Born at Lewisham Educated at Uppingham and Trinity College, Oxford Studied Oriental languages and entered Consular Service, being sent to Constantinople in 1910 and becoming Vice-Consul at Beirut the following year His *The Bridge of Fire* appeared in 1907, another volume of poems in 1911, *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* in 1913 and *The Old Ships* in 1915. His collected prose and the plays, *Hassan* and *Don Juan*, were published posthumously. He died of consumption in Switzerland

JOHN FREEMAN [1880–1929] (*page 40*) Born in London Became Chief Executive Officer in the Department of National Health Insurance. His first book of poems appeared in 1919 and others in

1921, 1925, 1926 and 1928. In 1920 he was awarded the Hawthorn-den Prize.

WILFRID GIBSON [1878] (*page 75*). Born at Hexham, Northum-berland. Became a social worker in the East End of London and later served in the ranks in the 1914 war. He is the author of more than twenty volumes of poems.

OLIVER ST JOHN GOGARTY [1878] (*page 76*). Educated at Stonyhurst, Trinity College, Dublin, and Oxford. Qualified as a doctor of medicine and subsequently became a Senator of the Irish Free State. His publications include *An Offering of Swans*, *Poems and Plays*, *Wild Apples* and, more recently, *As I was Going Down Sackville Street*, *Others to Adorn*, *Tumbling in the Hay*, *Going Native* and *Mr Petunia*.

GERALD GOULD [1885-1936] (*page 58*). Educated at Bracondale School, Norwich; University College, London, and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took 1st Class Honours in Classics and became a Fellow of Merton College. He abandoned an academic career to take up writing and politics, and from 1919 to 1922 he was Associate-Editor of *The Daily Herald*. He was the author of a number of volumes of essays and poetry and of several sociological and political books, and for some time before his death regularly reviewed new novels in *The Observer*. His collected poems were published in 1929.

JULIAN HENRY GRENFELL [1888-1915] (*page 37*). Son of the first Lord Desborough. Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford. In 1910 obtained a commission in the army and was killed in action in the 1914 War. As an author his fame rests on the poem, *Into Battle*, which appears in this collection.

FREDERICK WILLIAM HARVEY [1888] (*page 100*). Born in Gloucestershire. Became a solicitor. He served in the 1914 War and was taken prisoner in 1916. His published works include *Ducks*, *Farewell* and *Comrades in Captivity*.

FREDERICK ROBERT HIGGINS [1896-1941] (*page 112*). Born in Foxford, Co Mayo. Educated in country schools and in Dublin.

His first poems appeared in print when he was seventeen. He has edited several periodicals. His own publications include *Island Blood*, *The Dark Breed*, *The Gap of Brightness* and *Arable Pastures*.

**ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN** [1859-1936] (*page 22*) Educated at Bromsgrove School and St John's College, Oxford. Became one of the most distinguished Classical scholars of his time and Professor of Latin, first at the University of London and subsequently at Cambridge. His public fame, however, rests on his two small books of verses—*The Shropshire Lad*, published in 1896, and *Last Poems*, published in 1922.

**JAMES JOYCE** [1882-1941] (*page 81*) Born in Dublin. Educated at Clongowes Wood College, Belvedere College and Royal University, Dublin. Lived for a time in Dublin and then in Rome, Trieste, Zurich and Paris. His first published work was a book of poems entitled *Chamber Music* (1907). *Dubliners* appeared in 1914, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1916 and his famous *Ulysses* in 1925. *Finnegans Wake* was published in 1939.

**RUDYARD KIPLING** [1865-1936] (*page 31*). Born in Bombay and educated at United Services College, Devon. Worked as a journalist in India from 1882 to 1889, during which time his publications included *Departmental Duties*, *Plum Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three* and *Wee Willie Winkie*. His first novel, *The Light that Failed*, appeared in 1891, and the first of his books for children, *The Jungle Book*, in 1894. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

**DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE** [1885-1930] (*page 50*). Born at Eastwood, Notts. Father a coal-miner. Educated at University College, Nottingham, where he obtained scholarships, and became for a time a clerk and a schoolmaster. His novel, *The White Peacock*, appeared in 1911, and was followed by *The Trespasser* in 1912 and *Sons and Lovers* in 1913. He then travelled in Europe and Mexico, publishing *Twilight in Italy* in 1916, a volume of poems in the subsequent year, and *Mornings in Mexico* in 1927. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was published in 1928, the expurgated English edition appearing four years later. He was also author of a number of

volumes of short stories, essays and plays, and produced a quantity of drawings and paintings.

C. DAY LEWIS [1904] (*page 120*) Won a scholarship to Sherborne School and an Exhibition to Wadham College, Oxford. Spent a number of years as a schoolmaster: worked at Ministry of Information 1941-6. Clark Lecturer, Trinity College, Cambridge 1946. His books, which range from poetry to novels and critical studies, include *A Time to Dance*, *A Hope for Poetry*, *Starting Point*, *Word over All*, *Poetry for You*, *The Poetic Image*, and a verse translation of Virgil's *Georgics*.

LILIAN BOWES LYON [1895] (*page 110*) Born in Northumberland. Went to no school, but spent eighteen months at Oxford University shortly after the 1914 War. In 1929 she published a novel, *The Buried Stream*, and another anonymously two years later. Her first book of poems, *The White Hare*, appeared in 1934 and her second, *Bright Feather Fading*, in 1936. She lives in Hertfordshire, but remarks that it is to Northumberland that both she and her work really belong.

LOUIS MACNEICE [1907] (*page 131*). Born at Belfast. Read Litteræ Humaniores at Oxford 1926-30, then became Lecturer in Classics at the University of Birmingham until 1936, when appointed Lecturer in Greek at Bedford College, London. Since 1941 has been a feature writer and producer for the B.B.C. His books include *Blind Fireworks*, *Letters from Iceland* (with W. H. Auden), *The Earth Compels*, *Autumn Journal*, *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats*, *Plant and Phantom*, *Christopher Columbus*, *Springboard*, *The Dark Tower*, *Holes in the Sky*.

CHARLES MADGE [1912] (*page 140*). Educated at Winchester and Magdalene College, Cambridge. Founder and organizer of Mass-observation. Contributor to numerous periodicals and author of several books. Is a director of The Pilot Press Ltd.

JOHN MASEFIELD [1878] (*page 71*) As a boy ran away to sea. He then lived for two years in America working at odd jobs, re-

turned to England and became attached to the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*. The first of his many volumes of poems was *Salt-Water Ballads* which appeared in 1902. Among his long narrative poems are *The Everlasting Mercy*, published in 1911, *Dauber* published in 1913 and *Reynard the Fox* published in 1919. He is also the author of a number of plays, novels, essays and short stories. He was appointed Poet Laureate on the death of Robert Bridges in 1930 and in 1935 received the Order of Merit. In 1937 he was elected President of the Society of Authors in succession to Sir James Barrie.

CHARLOTTE MEW [1870-1928] (*page 25*). Daughter of an architect whose early death left his family in financial difficulties. Charlotte Mew never escaped from poverty, although her circumstances were alleviated when, as a result of efforts made on her behalf by Thomas Hardy, John Masefield and Walter de la Mare, she received in 1922 a Civil List pension of £75 a year. Shortly afterwards, however, the death of her mother, followed by the death of her sister, led to a breakdown in health, and her sad life was ended by her own hand in a London nursing home.

ALICE CHRISTIANA MEYNELL [1847-1922] (*page 19*). Spent much of her youth in Italy. Married Wilfrid Meynell. Her first volume of poems, *Preludes*, was published in 1875. Further volumes appeared in 1901, 1918 and 1923, and in the latter year a complete edition of her poems was also published. She was also the author of a number of books of essays and criticism.

HAROLD MONRO [1879-1932] (*page 43*). Born in Brussels. Educated at Radley College and Caius College, Cambridge. Author of some half-dozen books of poems. Founded in 1912 the Poetry Bookshop, where with his wife's help he did much to fan revival of interest in poetry and was responsible for the publication of the books of *Georgian Poetry* edited by Edward Marsh.

THOMAS STURGE MOORE [1870-1944] (*page 67*). Born at Hastings. Author of many volumes of poetry. He was also a wood-engraver and wrote several books of art criticism.

EDWIN MUIR [1887] (*page 86*). Born at Deerness, Orkney Islands. He attended Kirkwall Burgh School until he was fourteen, when, with the rest of his family, he went down to Glasgow. From then until he was thirty-one he worked in various offices there. In 1919 he married Willa Anderson and came to London, where he lived for two years on free-lance work. In 1921 he gave up a job on *The New Age* and he and his wife moved to Prague. They lived a nomad life in various continental countries until about 1927. In 1945 he became resident representative of the British Council in Prague. He has written several volumes of poetry, including *Variations on a Time Theme*, some fiction, much criticism, and a good deal of translation jointly with his wife.

SIR HENRY JOHN NEWBOLT [1862-1938] (*page 28*). Born at Bilston. Educated at Clifton College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was called to the Bar and practised for twelve years. From 1900 to 1904 he was Editor of the *Monthly Review* and President of the English Association in 1927-8. He was created a Knight in 1915 and a Companion of Honour in 1922. His numerous publications include, in addition to verse, naval and military histories and books for the young.

ALFRED NOYES [1880] (*page 77*). Born in Staffordshire. Educated at Exeter College, Oxford. In 1914 he was elected to the Professorship of Modern English Literature at Princeton University. In 1916 he became temporarily attached to the Foreign Office. In 1918 he was awarded a C.B.E. He is the author of a large number of books, mainly poems and literary criticism. His most acclaimed work is his epic of scientific discovery, *The Torchbearers*, published in three volumes, the first in 1922 and the last in 1930. In the latter year he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

WILFRED OWEN [1893-1918] (*page 44*). Born at Oswestry. Killed in action in France a week before the Armistice of 1918. A volume of his poems was published in 1920.

HERBERT E. PALMER [1880] (*page 78*). Born at Market Rasen, Lincs. He was educated at Woodhouse Grove School, Birmingham.

University and Bonn University He became a schoolmaster in 1899 and was teaching in France and Germany for over eight years previous to the War of 1914 In 1921 he gave up teaching to concentrate on literature and journalism In 1932 he was awarded a Civil List pension for 'distinction as a poet' He is the author of numerous volumes of verse of which the most recent include *Summit and Chasm*, *The Vampire*, *The Gallows Cross* and *A Sword in the Desert* Among his prose works are *The Mistletoe Child* and *Post-Victorian Poetry*

RUTH PITTER [1897] (page 117). Daughter of an elementary school teacher. Educated at an elementary school and at Coburn School, Bow From 1915 to 1917 she was employed at the War Office and from 1918 to 1930 by the Walberswick Peasant Pottery Co. Since 1930 she has been a partner in the firm of Deane and Forester Her first volume of poems was published in 1920, further volumes appearing in 1927 and 1931. *A Mad Lady's Garland* was published in 1934 and *A Trophy of Arms* (which won her the Hawthornden Prize) in 1936 Since then she has written *The Spirit Watches*, *The Rude Potato*, *The Bridge* and *Pitter on Cats*

JOHN PUDNEY [1909] (page 135) Educated at Gresham's School, Holt Producer and writer on staff of B.B.C. 1934-7, Correspondent of *News Chronicle*, 1937-41, served with the R.A.F. in the Mediterranean and France 1941-5 Stood for Parliament as a Labour candidate in the General Election of 1945 Poet, novelist, short story writer and journalist. His books include *Spring Encounter*, *Open the Sky*, *And Lastly the Fireworks*, *Dispersal Point*, *The Green Grass Grew All Round*, *It Breathed Down my Neck* and, the official publications, *The Air Battle of Malta* and *Atlantic Bridge*

HERBERT EDWARD READ [1893] (page 108) Was born at Kirbymoorside, Yorkshire He was educated at Crossley's School, Halifax, and Leeds University He fought in France and Belgium 1915-18 and was awarded the M.C. and the D.S.O. Subsequently he was for nine years Assistant Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum and then until 1933 Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh

University. He is now a Director of the publishing firm of Routledge. His principal publications include *Collected Poems* (1914-1934), *The Green Child*, *The Innocent Eye*, *Reason and Romanticism*, *English Prose Style*, *Form in Modern Poetry*, *Wordsworth*, *In Defence of Shelley*, *The Meaning of Art*, *Art Now*, *Art and Society*, *Education through Art*, *A World within a War*, *A Coat of Many Colours* and *The Grass Roots of Art*.

ISAAC ROSENBERG [1890-1918] (*page 39*) Killed in action in the 1914 War. He wrote poetry from boyhood, but little of it appeared in print until the publication of a collection of his poems four years after his death. His complete works, including a mass of unfinished material — prose as well as verse — appeared in 1937.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL ('A. E.') [1867-1935] (*page 32*). Born in Co. Armagh, Ireland. Educated at Rathmines School. During much of his life concerned himself with Irish agricultural problems and from 1905 to 1923 edited *The Irish Homestead*. In 1923 he founded the *Irish Statesman* which he edited until 1930. He also played a prominent part in the formation of the Irish National Theatre, but it is as a poet and mystic that he is likely to be chiefly remembered. Volumes of his poetry appeared at frequent intervals from 1904 until the end of his life.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON [1886] (*page 84*). Educated at Marlborough and Clare College, Cambridge. Served in the 1914 War. Was Literary Editor of *The Daily Herald* in 1919. He was awarded the Hawthornden Prize for his *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* published in 1928. Among his volumes of verse are *The Old Huntsman* published in 1917, *Counter Attack*, *War Poems*, *Vigils* and *Rhymed Ruminations*.

EDITH SITWELL [1887] (*page 89*). D Litt. Born at Scarborough. Educated privately. In collaboration with her brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, was responsible for *Wheels*, which appeared annually from 1916 to 1921 and contained poetry which contrasted violently in character with the contents of the Georgian anthologies which were appearing at the same time. Among the most recent of her many volumes of poetry are *Street Songs*, *Green*

*Song* and *A Song of the Cold* Her other works include *Bath*, *The English Eccentrics*, *Aspects of Modern Poetry*, *Victoria of England*, *I Live Under a Black Sun*, *A Poet's Notebook* and *Fanfare for Elizabeth*.

SIR OSBERT SITWELL, BART [1892] (page 105). Born in London, eldest son of Sir George Sitwell, Bart, and brother of Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell Educated at Eton Served from 1913 to 1919 with Grenadier Guards Author of several novels (including *Before the Bombardment*), a number of volumes of short stories, many poems (including *England Reclaimed* and *Mrs Kumber*) Three volumes of his autobiography have so far appeared under the titles of *Left Hand*, *Right Hand*<sup>1</sup>, *The Scarlet Tree* and *Great Morning*

SACHEVERELL SITWELL [1897] (page 113) Born in Scarborough Brother of Edith and Osbert Sitwell Educated at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford Author of a number of volumes of poems (including *The Thirteenth Caesar*, *The Cyder Feast* and *Canons of Giant Art*), biographies of Mozart and Liszt and various studies of Baroque Art in different parts of Europe His *British Architects and Craftsmen* appeared in 1945

BERNARD SPENCER [1909] (page 136) Is a schoolmaster Edited *Oxford Poetry* in 1931 and 1932, and poems of his have appeared in *New Verse* and elsewhere

STEPHEN SPENDER [1909] (page 137) Educated at University College School and University College, Oxford Served with the N.F.S. during war Co-editor of *Horizon* 1939-41 Among his recent works are *Trial of a Judge*, *The Still Centre*, *Ruins and Visions*, *Life and the Poet*, *The Creative Element*, *Instead of Death*, *Rejoice in the Abyss* and *European Witness*

JAMES STEPHENS [1882] (page 82) Born in Dublin Became a typist in a Dublin lawyer's office Author of *The Crock of Gold*, published in 1912, other books of stories and fairy stories and several volumes of poetry

ARTHUR SYMONS [1865-1945] (*page 60*) Born in Wales of Cornish parentage His first publication was *An Introduction to the Study of Browning* in 1886. Numerous other literary studies, volumes of poetry, travel books and work coming generally under the head of Belles Lettres followed. He was a close friend of Verlaine and in much of his work was considerably influenced by Baudelaire and the Symbolist movement

A. S. J. TESSIMOND [1902] (*page 120*). After he left Liverpool University he tried schoolmastering for a few months, then gave it up and worked in London bookshops for about two years For the last eight years or so he has been a copywriter in two successive London advertising agencies. He has published one book of verse, *The Walls of Glass*.

DYLAN THOMAS [1914] (*page 148*) Educated at Swansea Grammar School Did a year's newspaper reporting, and for a time tried odd jobs and hack journalism Published 18 *Poems* in 1934 and 25 *Poems* in 1936. Books published since that time have been *The Map of Love*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, *The World I Breathe* and *Deaths and Entrances* He is also a frequent broadcaster

PHILIP EDWARD THOMAS [1878-1917] (*page 24*) Educated at St Paul's School and Lincoln College, Oxford. Served in the 1914 War with the Artists' Rifles and died in action at Arras He was the author of several books on the English countryside and of a number of volumes of essays, critical studies and poems A collected edition of the latter was published in 1920

FRANCIS JOSEPH THOMPSON [1859-1907] (*page 14*). Born at Preston Educated at Ushaw College, Durham, and Owens College, Manchester, where he studied medicine Failing to obtain a degree, he came to London and lived in ill-health and poverty until Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, to whom he had submitted some poems, recognizing in him a poet of unusual quality, came to his aid His first volume of poems, which included *The Hound of Heaven*, was published in 1893 and others in 1895 and 1897 His prose work consisted chiefly of literary criticism, but included *Health and*

*Holiness* and a *Life of Ignatius Loyola*, the latter being published two years after his death of consumption in 1907. The complete edition of his works, edited by Wilfrid Meynell, was published in 1913.

WALTER JAMES REDFERN TURNER [1889-1946] (page 103). Born in Melbourne, Australia, and educated at the Scotch College, Melbourne. He then travelled in South Africa and Europe until the outbreak of war in 1914 and served with the armed forces during the years 1916-19. He was music critic to *The New Statesman*, dramatic critic to *The London Mercury* from 1919 to 1923, and literary editor of *The Daily Herald* from 1920 to 1923. He was the author of a number of volumes of poetry and also published several novels and collections of essays and studies. His play, *The Man who Ate the Popomack*, was published in 1922.

LAURENCE WHISTLER [1912] (page 141). Educated at Stowe School and Balliol College, Oxford. His first book was *Armed October*, published in 1932. *Four Walls*, for which he was awarded the first King's Medal for poetry, appeared in 1934. He has since published further volumes of poetry, and a life of Sir John Vanbrugh.

HUMBERT WOLFE [1885-1940] (page 59). Educated at Bradford Grammar School and Wadham College, Oxford. Became Principal Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Labour. In 1918 received a CBE and in 1925 a CB. Author of many books of verse and critical studies.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS [1865-1939] (page 33). Born in Dublin. Educated at Godolphin School, Hammersmith, and Erasmus Smith School, Dublin. After three years as an art student he abandoned art for literature and founded Irish Literary Societies in London and Dublin. He also, with the co-operation of Lady Gregory and other enthusiasts, created the Irish National Theatre. His first publication was *The Wanderings of Oisín* in 1889. Subsequently he published a large number of plays, volumes of poetry, anthologies and critical works. In 1923 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.

ANDREW YOUNG [1885] (*page 83*) Born in Elgin. He was brought up in Edinburgh, where he first attended the Royal High School, then graduated in Arts at the University. He came south in 1920 to live in Hove and explore the countryside in search of 'plants and poems.' He has written a religious play *Nicodemus*, for which Imogen Holst wrote the music. Among his books of poems are *Winter Harvest*, *The White Blackbird*, *Speak to the Earth* and *Collected Poems*.

## *Index of First Lines*

A cold coming we had of it'	PAGE 93
A scent of esparto grass -- and again I recall	75
A snake came to my water-trough	52
All is degradation in the chambers of dead bones	113
Already fallen plum-bloom stars the green	111
Although the snow still lingers	83
Another Bull! another Bull!	118
Architects plant their imagination, weld their poems on rock	120
At the dead centre of the boundless plain	86
At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows	55
August for the people and their favourite islands	128
Because it is the day of Palms	60
Borrowed wings on his ankles	131
But the root of the matter is I am growing old	78
Call not thy wanderer home as yet	32
Calm, calm the moving waters all the night	60
Cities and Thrones and Powers	31
Civilization is hooped together, brought	35
Cobbled with rough stone which rings my tread	136
Dolls' faces are rosier but these were children	109
Enough! Why should a man bemoan	76
First in the North The black sea-tangle beaches,	87
Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June	29
For those who had the power	123
From shadows of rich oaks outpeer	110
From the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers	118
From this wet island of birds and chimneys	139
From troubles of the world	100
Gather or take fierce degree	108
Happy are men who yet before they are killed	44
He sayeth there is no sin, and all his sin	47
He stood among a crowd at Drumahair	33
He will watch the hawk with an indifferent eye	137

- Hearing of harvest rotting in the valleys  
Here is the soundless cypress on the lawn  
Here lay a fair fat land  
Here where the cold pure air is filled with darkness  
How splendid in the morning glows the lily. with what grace  
he throws  
How will I hold myself  
I am frightened, sweetheart – that's the long and short  
I am tired of the wind  
I fled Him, down the nights and down the days  
I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
I heard a linnet courting  
I know not why I yearn for thee again  
I looked on that prophetic land  
I sang as one  
I saw you  
I think continually of those who were truly great  
I will not let thee go  
In the northern hemisphere  
It was a bright day and all the trees were still  
Let the damned ride their earwigs to Hell, but let me not  
join them  
Look, stranger, at this island now  
Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed  
Love is a keeper of swans!  
Memory, out of the mist, in a long slow ripple  
No shields now  
Nor dread nor hope attend  
Not locus if you will but envelope  
Nothing is enough!  
Now first, as I shut the door  
Now watch these phantoms  
O living pictures of the dead  
O Merlin in your crystal cave  
Of caterpillars Fabre tells how day after day  
Oh subterranean fires, break out!  
On old Cold Crendon's windy tops  
On the coast of Coromandel

# INDEX OF FIRST LINES

169  
PAGE

Once, only once, never again, never	65
Only last week, walking the hushed fields	112
Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us	46
Our friends go with us as we go	76
Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,	12
Playing upon the hill three centaurs were	82
Poor fool who stood alone	56
Sally is gone that was so kindly	66
She grew within his heart as the flushed rose	93
Shot? so quick, so clean an ending?	22
Since I have seen a bird one day	42
Sir, you should notice me I am the Man	55
So light we were, so right we were, so fair faith shone	30
Sombre the night is	39
Strings in the earth and air	81
Tall nettles cover up, as they have done	24
Tell me not here, it needs not saying	23
The blue laguna rocks and quivers	74
The darkness crumbles away	39
The force that through the green fuse drives the flower	148
The guns spell money's ultimate reason	138
The leader whom the people lost they laid	141
The leaves hang on the boughs	84
The <i>Loch Achray</i> was a clipper tall	71
The long-rolling,	82
The naked earth is warm with spring	37
The sea that is above the sky	49
The sun, of whose terrain we creatures are	140
The sunlight on the garden	134
There's much afoot in heaven and earth this year	19
These, in the day when heaven was falling	23
They hunt, the velvet tigers in the jungle	104
This field has buried men is browed	110
This is the horror that, night after night	58
This thin elastic stick was plucked	147
Thou angel face! — like a small exquisite cage	68

Thou art the Way  
Thou who singest through the earth  
Thus spoke the lady underneath the trees  
Tide be runnin' the great world over  
Twelve o'clock  
Twenty years ago  
Under my window-ledge the waters race  
Voices moving about in the quiet house  
We are the hollow men  
We walked in lemon-woods  
What have I waited for the third of my life  
What lovely things  
*When first my way to fair I took*  
When I lie where shades of darkness  
When I was but thirteen or so  
When will men again  
Where once the waters of your face  
Whirl, snow, on the blackbird's chatter  
'Who knows what a man may think'  
Who said, 'Peacock Pie'?  
Your grapnel eyes dredging my body through

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